

LETTERS OF
GEORGE MEREDITH

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GEORGE MEREDITH

COLLECTED AND EDITED BY
HIS SON

IN TWO VOLUMES
—
VOL. I
1844 1881

LONDON
CONSTABLE AND COMPANY LTD
1912



*George Meredith
at the age of three
from an oil painting*

PREFACE

THE Letters of George Meredith here brought together have been printed first and foremost for his friends, and this fact must explain whatsoever may appear illogical, superfluous and maybe obscure in this book. The collection is not meant to form a narrative of his life, nor indeed does it profess to be complete. Many of his intimate friends, and a large number of his letters to them, do not for various reasons appear at all here. Very few letters for instance, of the many written to Cotter Morison are available the majority having been most unfortunately destroyed. Those written to Lionel Robinson, to Stephen Hamilton, and to Maurice Fitzgerald if any indeed exist, are inaccessible and few letters to Arthur Cecil Blunt and many others can be found. To the friends of his later years his letters were always rare thus none appear to Lord Haldane, though a frequent visitor to Flint Cottage, and hardly any exist to John Dovell a friend of long standing and one of his executors or to Colonel and Mrs Lewin.

Many a close friendship indeed does not appear at all in these volumes, and I wish for this reason to note here one or two among them. My father's obligations for instance, to Miss Louisa and Miss Mary Lawrence were very great their home in Whitehall

Edinburgh T and A Constable, Printers to His Majesty

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

GEORGE MEREDITH AT THE AGE OF THREE YEARS

Frontispiece Vol I

GEORGE MEREDITH AND HIS SON ARTHUR *To face page 79*

ARTHUR G MEREDITH BY DANTE GABRIEL

ROSSETTI " " 136

GEORGE MEREDITH AT THE AGE OF EIGHTY

Frontispiece Vol II

Place, the rendezvous of many people eminent in literature and science, was always open to him. The same is true in regard to Mrs. Drummond of Fredley, Mr and Mrs. Frederick Jameson, and Mr. and Mrs. H. G. Plimmer, at whose house many of his happiest later days were spent. Very gratefully to be remembered are Mrs. Christopher Wilson and Sir Trevor and Lady Lawrence.

I have further to express my sincere thanks to all those who have so readily placed at my disposition the bulk of the letters printed in these volumes. To my friends J. M. Barrie, Thomas Seccombe, and Edward Hutton I am indebted for much advice and assistance.

W. M. M.

1912.

LETTERS OF GEORGE MEREDITH

THE first ancestor of George Meredith of whom we have any record his great-grandfather John Meredith was living in Portsea in the middle of the eighteenth century and there in the parish church his son Melchizedek (or Melchisedec the name is variously spelt) was baptized in June 1703

Melchizedek Meredith early in life became a tailor and naval outfitter his shop being at No 73 High Street Portsmouth He was a remarkable and a very handsome man and his business soon became the leading one of its kind in the great naval port¹ But his ambitions were not limited to his shop he was on friendly terms with many of his customers who probably included all the famous sailors of that great period and was a welcome guest in some of the best houses of the neighbourhood While still quite a young man he had married a woman as remarkable it would seem, as himself her name her Christian name for we are at present ignorant of her family which belonged to the professional class was Anne she was ten years older than her husband but like him tall and very handsome They were in fact a notable couple In *The Great Mel'* and *Mrs Mel* of *Evan Harrington* we have their portraits the only literal family portraits let it be noted in the book

Melchizedek Meredith whose fine presence and manners won him universal popularity especially with women was used to take his pleasures abroad it would appear to the

¹ It is referred to by Captain Marryat in *Peter Simple* vol ii chap vi. We called at Meredith's the Tailor and he promised that by the next morning we should be fitted complete

last ten years or so of his life in Southsea where he died in 1876

The young George Meredith, on his father's departure for London remained in Portsmouth where he went to school. His mother's small fortune was left in the hands of trustees for him. Later he became a ward in Chancery the trust money having for the most part disappeared. His chief recollection of this time seems to have been the three dreary church services he attended on Sunday when during the sermon he would invent tales in the manner of St George and the Dragon or of the kind found in the *Arabian Nights* of which he was very fond and which came to such fruition later in the *Sharing of Shagpat*. At the school in Portsmouth he learned he said little or nothing and it was not till at the age of fourteen he was sent to Neuweid that his education at any rate his literary education may be said to have begun.

The Moravian school at Neuweid on the Rhine near Cologne was founded in 1756. In the first fifty years of its existence its pupils for the most part came from Switzerland. Later many German boys entered the school but the years from 1831 to 1842 are known in the school as the English period nearly a hundred and fifty English boys being sent to the school in that decade. Among them was George Meredith who entered the school on August 18 1842. He remained there without returning home for two years and from this time we may date his first and most vivid and lasting impressions of the Rhine which bore fruit later in *Farina*. The religious influence of the place upon his young mind would seem to have been as indeed he confessed profound to which the following letter bears witness.

A 'LEAVING LETTER WRITTEN TO A SCHOOLFELLOW
To R M Hill

NEUWEID July 8 1844

MY DEAR HILL—During the time that we've lived together one feeling whether in union or shall I say

neglect of his business and his family, especially in his later years. He kept horses and hunted, was a member of a local Freemasons' lodge, and joined the Portsmouth Yeomanry in the capacity of an officer at the time of the threatened invasion of Napoleon. In 1801, and again in 1803-4, he was a churchwarden of his parish church of St Thomas, to which in the latter year he and his fellow-warden presented a set of silver plate.

In 1814 Melchizedek died, leaving behind him a large family, of which those who chiefly interest us are his eldest son Augustus, who succeeded him in the business, and four daughters—all beautiful girls—Anne Eliza, who in 1809 married Thomas Burbey, a Portsmouth banker, Louisa, who in 1811 married John Read, Consul-General for the Azores, later a knight of the Portuguese Order of the Tower and Sword, Harriet, who in the same year married John Hellyer, a brewer, and Catherine Matilda, who in 1819 married Samuel Burdon Ellis, then a lieutenant in the Royal Reserves, and who later became General and Knight Commander of the Order of the Bath.

Augustus Armstrong Meredith was born in 1797 and christened Gustave Urmston, which was later changed, and the change is noted in the register, to Augustus Armstrong. He seems to have been somewhat wild and extravagant and, though he had business ability, to have spent money faster than he made it. He married about 1824 Jane (Eliza) Macnamara, daughter of Michael Macnamara of The Point, Portsmouth. The only child of this marriage was George Meredith, born February 12, 1828, at 73 High Street, Portsmouth, and baptized on April 9th in the church of St Thomas, seven months before the death of his grandmother.

Mrs Augustus Meredith died when her son was five years old, and the business having apparently gone to pieces after the death of Mrs Mel, Augustus, at some time after 1837, migrated to London, where, however, he was no more successful than he had been in Portsmouth, and later proceeded to the Cape, whence he returned to spend the

At Edward Peacock's rooms in London George Meredith was a frequent visitor, and it was as his guest that he first met Peacock's sister, Mrs Mary Ellen Nicolls widow of Lieutenant Edward Nicolls, who commanded H M S *Dwarf* and was lost at sea with his ship. Mrs Nicolls was a woman of considerable beauty great intelligence, some literary achievement and brilliant and irrepressible wit. She had one child Edith. George Meredith when he first met her was but twenty one years of age. He was very poor, he had finally cut himself adrift from the law and it is doubtful whether he had kept in touch with his family, certainly he did not look to them for assistance. On August 9 1840 Meredith and Mrs Nicolls were married.

The next few years were spent chiefly on the Continent at the expense of a small legacy from a Portsmouth relative. On his return to England journalism poetry the *Sharing of Shagpat* and the planning of *Richard Feverel* occupied his time. He and his wife had no settled home. For some time they boarded at The Limes Weybridge the house of Mrs Macirone a woman of considerable culture. There they met Frith the artist who was also boarding there and there Meredith made many of his early literary friends among them Sir Alexander and Lady Duff Gordon and their children, who were then lodging in another cottage hard by, and to whom he was introduced by Tom Taylor. Here too he met R H Horne.

To R H Horne¹

To R H H with DAPHNE²

That you will take the meaning of this verse
 I know, deep hearted friend and earnest man,
 Poet! and thro' the simple picture see
 The winged fancy rising from the flower!

¹ Richard Henry [or Hengst] Horne 1803 1884 journalist friend and correspondent of Mrs Browning and author of *Orion* (1843) critical essays entitled *A New Spirit of the Age* (1844) etc.

² Daphne first published in *Poems* 1851

enmity, no that is too harsh, has agitated our respective bosoms It is fellowship. O may God grant that all may have the same feeling towards you to make your life happy. But true fellowship is not to be had without Christianity, not the name but the practice of it I wish you the greatest of all things 'God's blessing,' which comprehends all I would or could otherwise say.—Yours,

GEORGE MEREDITH.

It was at the age of sixteen, upon January 7, 1844, that Meredith left school, returned to London, and in due course was articled to Mr R. S Charnock, F S.A, a solicitor with chambers at 10 Godliman Street, E C. For the law he had no taste, his income was very small and irregular, and he frequently lived at this time on a single bowl of porridge a day, reading widely in the classics, and giving himself to the study of German literature Long walks through the market gardens of Chelsea into Surrey and Middlesex were his recreation To Literature as a career he turned naturally, seeing in it the means for the expression of his love of nature, his philosophy of life, and perhaps—though this weighed least with him—a source of livelihood Charnock was not only an antiquary, he was also a man of literary tastes and gifts, and his circle of friends included many of the young writers and artists of the time Largely under his auspices there was started, by a little literary coterie about the year 1848, a MS magazine named the *Monthly Observer*, to which articles and drawings were contributed. Each member of the society interested in it took his or her turn as editor, and each number was circulated among the members for criticism. Among the contributors to this magazine were Austin Daniel, Hilaire de Ste Croix, R G. Snell, R. S Charnock, Edward Peacock, and his sister Mrs Nicolls, son and daughter of Thomas Love Peacock It was in the *Monthly Observer* that George Meredith's first published poem 'Chillianwallah' appeared in manuscript in 1849, and in the same year was printed in *Chambers's Journal* (July 7).

their friends the brothers Fitzgerald. It was however at the house of Thomas Love Peacock¹ at Lower Halliford on June 11 1853 that a son was born to them whom they named Arthur Gryffydd.

Two highly strung temperaments—man and wife—each imaginative emotional quick to anger cuttingly satirical in dispute each an incomparable wielder of the rapier of ridicule could not find domestic content within the narrow bounds of poverty and lodgings. In 1858 came catastrophe with the result that George Meredith with his infant boy went to live in London thence to a cottage in Esher village and later to Copsham Cottage between Esher and Oxshott. Mrs Meredith returned to Weybridge where she died at Grotto Cottage Oatlands Park, in 1861.

To John W Parker

WEYBRIDGE Dec. 12 1850

MY DEAR SIR—I send you a Selection of Poems completed and a List of others from which I intend selecting for the projected volume. Of the latter I prize the Cassandra² as my best work but it is not yet finished. The Shipwreck of Idomeneus³ is blank verse and 17 pages. The rest with exception of one or two of the ballads are ready. Of the Poems I forward you I wish to have your opinion as early as you can give it. If you think the specimens I forward you inferior to the requirements of the age not saleable and so forth I shall very likely be content to abide by your decision for a time. Mr Horne speaks very favourably of those he has seen but he has only seen the classical Poem and a few others.

¹ There are no letters to be found from or to Thomas Love Peacock but though George Meredith did not meet him until almost immediately before his marriage with Mrs Nicolls warm friendship and on George Meredith's part admiration existed between them.

² Of John W Parker and Son booksellers and publishers West Strand London

³ Cassandra did not appear in this volume but in *Modern Love* 1860.

LETTERS OF GEORGE MEREDITH

Too delicate for me to touch, or do
 Aught but suggest, send forth as Nature sends
 The unfettered insects fluttering with delight
 Thro' the long warm blue summer's day and folded
 At eve behind some rainy leaf, while the woods
 Sing wet with Tempest—On its wings alone
 Let it depend when once the warm-fingered sun
 Has touched it into life—Enough for me
 To paint the flower in all its natural hues
 And plant it, this done, its fate is with the sky
 But you will know how in these after days,
 First love still follows the fair, fleeting shape !
 From the flush'd morning wave and woodland valley
 Urging its wild pursuit, still in vain
 Swift Nature lends her forces, still in vain
 The old prophetic trees wave overhead—
 Ah ! happy he whose last inspired desire
 Conquering its anguish shall have power to pluck
 The never-fading laurel ! Round his brows
 Sweet Beauty hovers and a dawning gleam
 Wakes ever on the leaves, for they are steep'd
 In the springs of day, and therefore do we mark
 This strange foreshadowed crown of poet love,
 The crown of poet passion Thus to you
 I dedicate, and in your hands I place
 Daphne, the darling of my own first love
 So take her, part in friendship, but indeed
 Chiefly a tribute to the noble lyre
 Which sang of the giant bright whose starry limbs
 Still scale the midnight Heavens and plant aloft
 Heroic footsteps up untravelled space !
 Live long and wear that constellated wreath

Later Meredith and his wife were at other lodgings in Weybridge, in Felixstowe, and very frequently at Seaford, near

to-morrow ? We shall be glad to have you Come and stay a week The weather is lovely The heat quite sweltering Come, and if you like bring the Boulogne Fish fays to give a truthful representation of nature I should prefer you coming now, as I may not be here much longer, and the presence of the illustrious Franc boise(y) is desirable Mrs Meredith joins in kind regards She says you must come under pain of her displeasure Come, O Crowe ! Here is fishing bathing rowing, sailing lounging, running, pic nicing, and a cool who builds a basis of strength to make us equal to all these superhuman efforts So Come !

There is a train at ten A M first and second class the latter costs to Newhaven 9s 8d In the evening there is one at 6 P M with a Third Class the latter being 5s 11d It reaches Newhaven at $\frac{1}{2}$ past 8 From Newhaven to Seaford is a walk of two miles If you walk go on to the Hotel at Newhaven anyone will direct you the way You can go on the train I may perhaps meet you but on second thoughts this is unlikely as I may be over the hills at a pic nic But I shall be at home by the time you arrive Let no excuse delay and trust me —Anticipatingly yours

GEORGE MEREDITH

To Edward Chapman¹

SEAFORD SUSSEX Dec 15 1866

MY DEAR MR CHAPMAN,—Will you send me, this week the £25 for which I made application to sum the £70 requested in advance and so doing oblige your faithful poet

I remain here as I can work better than elsewhere though, engaged as I am, the DULNESS is something

¹ Of Chapman and Hall publishers Piccadilly London

and consequently insists on Ballads and modern ingredients which I have endeavoured since then to supply 'Sorrows and Joys,' 'The Two Blackbirds,' 'Infancy and Age'¹ are a selection from those published in 'Household Words.' The two 'blank verse metres' beginning 'How sweet on sunny afternoons' are selections from half a dozen of the sort, and will be, I think, the most original features in the volume. Also 'London by Lamplight' has two or more numbers to follow (but shorter ones), if you think fit. Besides these I am writing a Ballad for *Household Words*, which I think will be liked. I will tell you the subject when I see you. You will see that in the rape of Aurora I have followed the idea of Ariosto and inserted a little mythology—the union of the Sun and the Dawn—and in 'Daphne' I have avoided mention of 'Dan Cupid.' I have other 'Pictures of the Rhine,' but I thought six enough.

Thus far then I have explained the Contents of the parcel, which as soon as you can peruse, do, and let me know your opinions thereon and thereafter, when I will have the pleasure of calling on you and consulting as to the birth and baptism of my firstborn of the Muse.

*To Eyre Crowe*²

SEAFORD, SUSSEX

'MY DEAR CROWE,—Will you come down here to us

¹ Not reprinted. A number of further poems in *Household Words* are attributed to Meredith by Mr Matz (*TP's Weekly*, Feb 17, 1911). Except in the case of those already reprinted, proof is only forthcoming in the case of 'Monmouth' and 'Infancy and Age.' That in the case of many contributions to *Household Words*, Meredith lent his help to Horne and to Wills, as well as to his wife, there is little doubt. That the influence of his already marked style should be seen is not surprising, readers of many of the items attributed to him by Mr Matz will, however, find little resemblance to the work of Meredith even in his very early youth.

² Eyre Crowe, A.R.A., born 1824, son of Eyre Evans Crowe, the historian. He published two volumes on Thackeray.

To W C Bennett¹

SEAFORD SUSSEX April 27, 1877

SIR — I have to thank you for your latest volume of poems and in doing so I must beg your excuse for omitting to acknowledge a previous single piece forwarded to me and which I discover in the present collection. It is usual in such cases to say what we do like but I presume a sufficient balance in you to hear both

I like your songs and baby ballads very much. I like your feeling for English scenery and remarkable descriptive power. I do not like your idylls (e.g. the Boat race) because both the form the matter and the blank verse recall Tennyson so strongly, and one expects more than imitations from you. By the way the giving of a daughter to the conqueror in a Boat race is if British not customary. A girl might give herself but for a Papa so to stipulate implies unpleasant paternal contempt for the lover's physique and a sort of calculation seldom made I fancy. You see I speak freely

It seems to me that your taste is not for what you succeed in best, viz minute description and there you might produce a first rate Dutch home-story in ten eight line or say six line verse but I am passing my boundary in affecting to advise, and must honestly ask you to pardon me for the impertinence

When at Weybridge the Merediths first made the acquaintance of Sir Alexander and Lady Duff Gordon and their children Maurice Urania and Janet and at their house Tom Taylor Kinglake Mrs Norton J E Millais G F Watts

¹ Author of many volumes of verse between 1850 and 1870. A collected edition of his poems appeared in 1867 in Routledge's British Poets. The volume here acknowledged would appear to be *Queen Eleanor's Vengeance and Other Poems* (1857).

frightful, and hangs on my shoulders like Sinbad's old man of the Sea I dream of Boltons, I promise myself a visit there at Christmas, just for a beguilement, but it is doubtful if I shall quit hard work for a day, till the book is finished I will come Manuscript in hand Tell Mrs Chapman how much I should wish to see her, and Serious Meta, daughter of the Sage, also frolicsome Florence, not forgetting Reginald, the Roysterer

The name of this novel is to be 'The Fair Frankincense.' Tell me what you think of it?—There are to be two Prophets in the book, and altogether a new kind of villain, being Humbug active—a great gun likely to make a noise, if I prime him properly.

Have you, or do any of your people know of, a book of Hampshire Dialect? I have a Sussex Ballads, or Songs, with the provincialisms will serve. Perhaps Mr. Frederick Chapman may know of such a thing? Also a slang Dictionary, or book of the same with Gloss And if you have, or can get these, will you forward them by post?

Mrs Meredith is staying at Blackheath. Don't wait to send by her, as I am anxious she should spend Xmas in town Dulness will put out the wax lights, increase the weight of the pudding, toughen the turkey, make lead of the beef, turn the entire feast into a nightmare, down here, to one not head and heel at work. . .

I am glad 'Aurora Leigh' is so well received I have not read it, but the extracts promise Confirm to me the news of Bailey's¹ pension Will that £100 per ann chain him to earth, or only give him firmer spring into the empyrean! I should like to spin on the talk, but the paper contracts, and the Grave Man of business frowns already at four pages of it So farewell

¹ Author of *Festus*

The hand is for another
Which I have held so dear !

To pray that at the altar
You may be bless'd above
Ah help me, if I falter
And keep me true to love !

But once, but once look kindly—
Once clasp me with your spell
Let joy and pain meet blindly
And throb our dumb Farewell

At Copsham as previously at Weybridge and Seaford a frequent companion was Maurice Fitzgerald, who owned property at the latter place. He was one of the earliest to recognise Meredith's powers. Nephew to Edward Fitzgerald he was a student of literature an accomplished classical scholar and an epicure. He is suggested by Adrian Harley in *Richard Feverel*. Sir Francis Burnand in his *Records and Reminiscences* gives an interesting description of Meredith as he first met him in company with Fitzgerald at Copsham.

To Miss Janet Duff Gordon

Fitz¹ goes about with a volume of Francatelli in his hand. Thus we have colloquized :

Fitz 'Oyster soup is out of the question, with cod and oysters to follow. It must be brown. But if the Veal doesn't come from Brighton ! Good G— ! what a set of heathens these people are !'

POET 'Eh ? Oh yes brown of course !'

FITZ 'You haven't the slightest idea of the difficulties !'

POET (mooning) 'She was dressed very becomingly in white Sauce !'

¹ Maurice Fitzgerald

² Francatelli's book on Cookery

and many other artists and men of letters were frequent visitors¹ When Meredith left the neighbourhood his friends lost sight of him. On his return to Esher he found the Duff Gordons settled between Esher and Oxshott, and he himself went, soon after, to Copsham Cottage close by. Janet Duff Gordon and Edith Nicolls were playfellows at Weybridge, and tell how, as small children, Meredith enthralled them by wild fairy-tales which he spun for their edification. In so far as Meredith ever drew his characters direct from life, Janet Duff Gordon was his model for Rose Jocelyn in *Evan Harrington*, whilst her father and mother are pictured as Sir Frank and Lady Jocelyn

To Miss Janet Duff Gordon

SCHUBERT'S FAREWELL²

The Pines are darkly swaying
 The skies are ashen-grey .
 I mock my soul delaying
 The word I have to say

As if above it thundered
 That we, who are one heart,
 Should now for aye be sundered,
 My passion bids me part

I dare not basely languish,
 Nor press your lips to mine ,
 But with one cry of anguish,
 My darling I resign

Our dreams we two must smother
 The bitter truth is here

¹ See *The Fourth Generation*, by Janet Ross (London, Constable and Co., 1912), also the same author's *Three Generations of Englishwomen* (London, John Murray, 1888)

² Words written to Schubert's 'Addio' and given to Janet Duff Gordon

FITZ (with melancholy) 'I've given up all hope of the plovers' eggs! Heigho! (stretches himself in a chair in a state of absolute mental depression)

Poet regarding him, takes out note book writes Life is a thing of Circles like Dante's Hell In the narrowest of them Despair may be as abysmal Hope as great as in the widest! The patriot who sees his country enslaved the lover who wins a smile from his mistress one day and hears the next that she has bestowed the like on another gentleman these sorrow not or joy not more violently than one who is deprived of plovers eggs expectant of them or greets a triumphant dish of potatoes à la Bechamel!

About the year 1858 Meredith first met Frederick Augustus Maxse (1833-1900) Captain Maxse R N promoted Rear Admiral in 1877 was the second son of James Maxse by his marriage with Lady Caroline Fitzhardinge daughter of the fifth Earl of Berkeley He acted as naval A D C to Lord Raglan and after the battle of the Alma displayed conspicuous gallantry in carrying despatches from the army to the fleet Promoted Commander in 1855 he retired in 1867, and unsuccessfully contested Southampton in the Radical interest in the following year During this election Meredith canvassed actively for him He was also beaten in a subsequent contest for Middlesex in 1874 His Radical tendencies in these days were the dual outcome of his experiences of the inept unpreparedness of the Government for the war in the Crimea and the sufferings which he saw and shared in that campaign In later life he was a strong Unionist

To Captain Maxse

COPSHAM COTTAGE ESHAM.

MY DEAR CAPTAIN MAXSE --I have been struck down by illness and did not receive your pamphlet till two

FITZ. (taking it naturally) 'A la Bechamel. That's what I'm most anxious about. Do you think Ockendon understood my directions? The potatoes to be sliced about half an inch sauce poured over then fresh layer! —(becomes excited) 'if well done, I know nothing better in the world than Potatoes à la Bechamel!'

POET (writes) 'And you are all I care for in the world, dearest Rose! I care for nothing but you on earth!' (Answers a trembly repeated query) 'Oh, yes! I like Maintenon cutlets very much'

FITZ (rubbing his hands) 'I can trust to old Ockendon for them, thank Heaven!'

POET (getting awake) 'Your wife should be a good cook, Maurice?'

FITZ 'Well, if she's at all educated and civilized, she will be'

POET 'I know a marriageable young lady who hates potatoes, doesn't understand a particle of the great science, and finishes her dinner in two minutes'

FITZ 'Lord help the man who marries her!'

POET 'I think he'll be a lucky fellow'

FITZ 'No accounting for tastes!' (Pursues the theme) 'The pheasant opposite you I'll take the plovers Ockendon says the Jelly has set Fancy your not knowing how much a gill is! —a gill and a half of Maraschino I think the Jelly will be a success'

POET 'Upon my honour, you look as radiant as if you had just touched off an ode!'

FITZ 'We won't open the Champagne till the 2nd course'

POET 'I stick to Claret —What's the matter?'

FITZ (impatiently) 'I have asked you half a dozen times whether you think the Ratafias should garnish the Jelly!'

POET (indifferently) 'Just as you like' (Writes) 'But a misfortune now befall our hero'

sions of humiliation and shame attendant thereon
 Where have the French more enthusiastic admirers of
 their valour ? of their intellect ? of their wit ? I think
 our hands are given heartily across Channel till this
 cursed uneasiness about our 'homes' makes the Briton
 draw back and clench his honest fist

Of the Emperor I strongly approve your bold speaking
 He has done great work and shown great-mindedness
 towards us The veil of the 'Panic' is between us and
 him but even should he become our foe the Italian
 campaign must be seen in its true features sooner or later
 It is worthy an Epic About Savoy our singing has been
 small, but the political principle involved in the appro-
 priation of this province and the danger to Switzerland
 justify plain speaking —Pardon me, I beg and believe
 me, my dear Captain Maxse yours very faithfully

GEORGE MEREDITH

*Verses given in MS to Miss Janet Duff Gordon
 about the year 1859*

We sat beneath the humming pines
 We knew that we must part,
 I might not even speak by signs
 The motions of my heart

And as I took your hand and gazed
 Subdued into your eyes
 I saw the arm of Fate upraised,—
 And still d the inward cries

I saw that this could never be
 Which I had dared to pray
 And in the tear that fell from me
 There fell my life that day !

days back I have been happy to do my best with regard to corrections

I like the pamphlet. It goes with many of my views, and it is generous a point on which I lay stress, for the popular principle is avowed selfishness and breeches pocket, or bare sentimentalism, in dealing with foreign relations

I do not like the colloquial introduction 'J. B' and the 'West End' are in my opinion beneath the dignity of an earnest address to one's countrymen I have taken the liberty (for which I beg your excuse) to strike out one or two sentences

But, may I ask, are you not under some influence yonder? Are you not prompted by some peculiar feeling — a private friendship? The sound to me, throughout, is that of one whose heart was moved by personal esteem I mention this, because I think it will be a general impression; and I know enough of the French to be aware that some of them rise high with you in intimacy.

Anyhow I think the pamphlet must fail, for what might have floated will sink it It says true and pregnant things, but have you forgotten that when you are putting your countrymen and friend flagrantly in the wrong, they never can see it unless you consent to relieve their eyes with the shady doings of the opposite party.

You have not toned down your picture You put us in the wrong entirely Even I, who feel with you, entertained a constant protest as I read on

I think you should have devoted a page or two to a consideration of the sentiments of the different classes of Frenchmen towards England and to an exposition of the French character And it would have been as well to have made an attempt philosophically to account for these epidemics of animosity on both sides I believe that on ours it springs solely from panic, and the revul-

wouldn't my Henry do it?—Yes, but my dear Janet Willis and What's his name aren't in love with you, and they can't Passion does not inspire them As for your poet, he sinks to the lowest depths of prose and suggests the necessity for a fresh box a small one in addition to the one of elephantine proportions and yet unequal stomach You are to write to me, and say that you consent to this and I will call on W & W—If this is clear all right But I feel utterly perplexed

I have been and am knocked down again by the old illness I hope it won't last for it's horridly dispiriting

God bless you my dear girl! If you don't make a good wife I've never read a page of woman He's a lucky fellow to get you and the best thing he can do is to pray he may always know his luck Watts & Coutts¹ passed like doleful spectres this afternoon, in the fog The hunt is Queenless evermore?

Arthur 'hopes you're quite well' He can't think of anything more to say and on my telling him I've written so he explodes with laughter

Verses given in MS to Miss Janet Duff Gordon

LIED VON RASTRELLI

Deep deep under the sea
 Pearls throw their soft lights uselessly
 Hear the wave wander
 Hither and yonder
 Deep deep under the sea

High high thro the bright spheres
 Music there is no mortal hears
 (or Harps of the Angels thrill heavenly ears)

¹ Coutts huntsman of the Duke of Aumale's harriers

*Verases given in MS to Miss Janet Duff Gordon
about the year 1859 or 1860*

The waves are pressing up with force,
Along the screaming shore,
Like Phantom hosts of warrior horse,
They charge, beneath the roar

And each darts out a foamy tongue
As prone he falls, and dies
The dirge of many a soul is sung
Beneath yon stormy skies

And may it be my dirge of dust,
If she who has my plight,
If she I love shall wreck my trust,
And wrap my soul in night

In 1860 Miss Janet Duff Gordon became engaged to, and in December of the same year married, Henry James Ross, head of the firm of Briggs and Co, bankers, at Alexandria Mr Ross took part, with Layard, in the excavation of Nineveh He also wrote a book, *Letters from the East*, 1837-1857

To Miss Janet Duff Gordon.

COPSHAM, ESHER

‘ MY DEAR JANET,—Yesterday I went to Town, and of course forgot—not you—but your catalogue I therefore called on Wyllis and What’s-his-name and asked the latest period of the packing Thereupon a melancholy man conducted me to an enormous box ‘ That’s choke full, sir, and we’ve got 40 volumes more to stow in—somehow—I don’t know how’ This was my time to tell him that you had bought half of Mudie’s library, and expected that as well to be got into the said box —Why,

and with the best intentions in the world, no doubt but on the Earth I lie and imagination will picture the idea that I am going under it. Hero is a cheerful theme to address to a sweet young bride! But if I am not better by Saturday I shall not witness the wreath on my Janet's head nor see the fixing of the ring on her hand.

I am distressed to hear such bad accounts of my dear Lady Gordon. Come I will if I can, but I am horribly unwell (There's a rumour of the eldest C—— girl going to marry, —) — Your affectionate and faithful

GEORGE MEREDITH

To Mrs. Janet Poss

ESHER.

MY DEAR JANET — A thousand thanks for the photo. It is a good and fitting present at this awful instant. It admirably represents the occasion. Looking on it I see the corpse of the Maiden Janet. Just what she may henceforth give of herself and no more. It isn't bad, it's pleasant to have but it's Janet washed out and decorated with soot. Behind it lies her free youth. She looks darkly forward on the children of Egypt. It's Janet half Copt already.

How do you feel? Do write down half a page of your sensations and hand them to me under seal, with directions that I may read them a year hence and compare with results. Not that you're romantic and I don't suppose you flutter vastly just when you're caught but still dear Orange Blossom, you're a bit of a bird like the rest.

By the way, why am I to have the photo of Janet as wife while Arthur takes the maiden?

Of course I'll send out my books and my poems to my

Love's divine chorus,
Passes dead o'er us
High, high, thro' the bright spheres.

Dark, dark, here in my breast
Treasures and harpstrings idly rest
All my life lingers
Dumb for thy fingers
Dark, dark, here in my breast

*To F. Evans*¹

COPSHAM COTTAGE, ESHER, Jan. 21, 1860.

MY DEAR SIR,—I thank you for the £50 cheque on acct.

I tried to call on you yesterday, when I was in Town, but had no time. Perhaps you may as well, since you kindly undertake the task, write to Messrs Harper's agents, or send to them, and come to the best terms you can. The story² (as you may tell them) will suit Yankee sentiment and Yankee principles. Exalt me tolerably, and in fine, I shall be quite satisfied that you will arrange it as well as it can be done but there should be no loss of time.

N.B.—Perhaps, should it be needful, you may say that we are going to be guilty of no impropriety in this tale, and will never again offend young maids³

To Miss Janet Duff Gordon

COPSHAM, ESHER, 1860

MY DEAR ORANGE BLOSSOM,—I——⁴ has been at me,

¹ Of Bradbury, Evans and Co., proprietors of *Once a Week* and *Punch*, now Bradbury, Agnew and Co. 'Dear old Pater' Evans, Meredith used to call him ² *Evan Harrington*

³ *Richard Feverel* had been banned as 'immoral' and preached against from the pulpit—a fact which, in the 'sixties, did not stimulate the sale of fiction ⁴ The Esher doctor

I think you might at once put the 1st portion of Paul Bentley ' into the artist's hands

I wish you a sound digestion to your Christmas, and am my dear Lucas your faithful GEORGE MEREDITH

To Mrs Janet Ross

CORSHAM ESHER May 17 1861

MY DEAR JANET—The little man has been in great glee to answer you He had paper and everything ready to do so a week before your letter came, and his reply is all his own, and from his heart He must love you Who could fail to love one so staunch and tender to him ? Here have I waited silently thinking much of you and incurring I knew not what condemnation I have not thought of you less because I withheld my pen The truth is my experiences are all mental—I see nothing of the world and what I have to say goes into books However I am now compelled by my state of health to give it up for a time Your poet—dare I call myself that after hearing the rhapsodic eulogies of old Alder ?¹ I assure you my dear, I cannot equal him I might put him into rhythm but that would spoil his hearty idiom I feel quite a friendliness for old Alder after hearing him speak of you —‘I never saw a young lady like her and never shall again She 's a loss to Esher and to England ! ’ etc You are compared with Miss Gilbert and Miss Reynolds and men are dared to say that either fair equestrian surpassed you on horseback Apropos of the former lady Landseer has a picture of her in the Academy, leaning exhausted against the flanks of a mare couchant Taming of the Shrew ' the picture is named and it is sufficiently bad

¹ A butcher of Esher and a regular follower of the Due d Aumale's hounds

best public. Unless I do them horridly, and I must soon get stronger, or I shall

If I can come, as I trust to, I must return on Wednesday I have all the writing on a paper now on my shoulders Thursday is contribution day. I shall return and spend a week with your mother later, when she is alone, and may want me

And now, my dear, my future Copt, and my good friend forever, as I hope, farewell, till we meet I pray fervently you may be happy

I think of leaving Copsham, to live in two small town rooms, that I may save for Arthur's education The safest address to me from Egypt will be Chapman & Hall's, 193 Piccadilly.

To S. Lucas¹

ESHER

MY DEAR LUCAS,—You sent proofs of the first story (The Highwayman), but, if I haven't returned them, I have mislaid them Send proofs of the second story at once, as I have now time to finish it By the way, I don't think your common pay should extend to me, and you are bound to heighten the scale If you do, I will give you some very good stories, but I must have money. Evans, I am sure, will do this, upon your reputation

As to those that I wrote for the occasion, they have not my stamp upon them, and I would prefer not to append my name In the matter of verse, also, I shall rarely be able to give my time for the money I get for it You have the option of rejecting Consider whether you should not offer fitting inducements to contribute one's best ?

¹ Editor of *Once a Week* Of the 'Highwayman' and 'Paul Bentley' here referred to, no trace can be found

portrait in particular—I have not seen your mother for some days She has had another attack a very severe one It wears my heart to think of her And yet her constitution rallies from time to time and I have still strong hopes of her ultimate recovery She must not spend another winter in England—The baby is quite charming Like you but rosier and with a tendency to be just as positive She articulates admirably and shows qualities equal to the physiological promise I have noted from the first How I should wish Arthur to conquer a fair position in the world and lead her away as a certain Janet was led ! At present he is not brilliant but he is decidedly hopeful I don't want to force him yet I wish to keep him sound and to instil good healthy habits of mind and body In writing spelling and reading in memory for what he acquires few children surpass him And he really thinks—without being at all instigated to think I remained at Copsham for his sake, and perhaps shall not quit it for some time to come He will not go to a regular school till next year I don't like the thought of his going but it must be and so I submit

I have three works in hand The most advanced is *Emilia Belloni* of which I have read some chapters to your mother, and gained her strong approval Emilia is a feminine musical genius I gave you once sitting on the mound over Copsham an outline of the real story it is taken from Of course one does not follow out real stories and this has simply suggested Emilia to me— Then my next novel is called *A Woman's Battle* Qy—good title ? I think it will be my best book as yet The third is weaker in breadth of design It is called *Van Diemen Smith*—is interesting as a story Nous verrons —Last night I went with Maxse to the House of Commons to hear the Debate on the Constitution

Millais has nothing Hunt a 'Street Wooing in Cairo,' of which you could judge better than I Leighton has a 'Paolo and Francesca', painted just as the book has dropped and they are in no state to read more You would scorn it, but our friendship never rested on common sentiments in art I greatly admire it I think it the sole English picture exhibiting passion that I have seen I have the delight to stand alone in my judgment of this, as of most things, and I shall see the world coming round to my opinion, and thinking it its own Does that smack of the original George M?—Never mind Well there is a beautiful portrait of Alice P— Idealised of course—showing more in her than she possesses, but my friend Maxse—one who is strong on points of feminine beauty (a naval man loose upon society)—thinks her superior to the picture in physique He meets her out He said to me, the first time 'I think she thought me slow' —the second 'Is she stupid?' His conclusive judgment pronounces her an exquisitely plumed little pol parrot She is being admired people think she should wear more clothing The effect is said to be that of a damsel such as you see at the booth of a country fair—Maxse is a very nice fellow with strong literary tastes He was Naval Aide-de-Camp to Lord Lyons in the Crimea I dare say you have heard of him You would like him He is very anxious to be introduced some day to Rose Jocelyn I tell him that Janet ROSS is a finer creature If Rose satisfies him, how will not Janet! He has taken a cottage at Molesey, and we make expeditions together on foot Talking of Rose, did you see the Saturday? It says you are a heroine who deserve to be a heroine And yet I think I missed you Your Mother tells me that Mrs Austin speaks in very handsome terms of the performance generally, 'and of the

In conclusion, let me beg you to send to me and tell me anything that you want that I may have the pleasure to get it for you I rejoice with all my soul that you are so happy By the way, Maxse introduced me to the Comte de Paris the other day who said of your husband 'Mr Ross is a very clever man in a tone of conviction and esteem Of you he spoke as it pleased me to hear The Orleanists seem looking up owing to the Aumale pamphlet The Duke was chairman of the Literary Fund Dinner last night and spoke capitally

Remember me to your husband very kindly And please write soon and cordially forgive me My heart is very much with you and I am always at my Janet's service

To F M Evans

[ZÜRICH] July 9 1861

MY DEAR EVANS—Be so good as to send me £30 through your banker, to Innsbrück Address Poste Restante and please don't fail to do this within a couple of days after receipt of this letter as your servant will require it

Arthur is quite well and bore his travelling like a man He met with perfect kindness from everybody, and remarks that 'these Germans are nice people' He has it on his mind that he did not go to say good bye to Mrs Orridge Let her know his compunctionous visitings

Write a word of avis that your banker has done the good deed and also if Lucas has not written say whether he wants the continuation and conclusion of the 'Dyke Farm'¹

Zürich is a charming place with a clear lake fine hills,

¹ There is no trace of this story—probably an early title for *Rhoda Fleming*

I saw your friend Layard, but did not hear him Eothen¹ was absent. Gladstone swallowed the whole Conservative body with his prodigious yawn and eloquence alternately I never saw a man yawn so naively and excusably The truth is that there is some honesty but small stock of brains on the Conservative side I could not wait for Bright. I heard Horsman, who is good enough, and seems bidding for the Conservative leadership He will perhaps get it; but he is not the man to prop a sinking cause It is clear that we in England are going down to a lower circle Natural development, no doubt.

I have made friends with a nice fellow lately a son of the Ambassador at Athens, Sir T. W—— whom your mother knew. He married a Bonaparte—a daughter of Lucien—who is what all the Bonaparte women are. Two boys, N—— W—— and B—— W——. The latter I know. He has nice tastes, and is an odd mixture of Irishman and Corsican He wanted me to go to Athens with him. I may meet him returning and come home through Provence He is intimate with the members of the new School of Provençal poets there, and wishes me to know them Mistral I have read He is really a fine poet If I go I shall have something to write to you about

'The dear good Bart. looks melancholy riding alone
It's rather sad seeing him out Otherwise he is as
cheerful and of the same port as of yore

My dear, I have been thinking many a month of a Wedding present for you I don't like jewels, and books you have enough of It struck me that a magnificent photograph of your father and mother, Mossy and Rainy, would please you best. Your mother will sit when she is well enough. What say you ?

¹ Kinglake

The moment I leave England all 's dead silent to rear ward I 'm not of much importance but still I expect my country to make a little sign I suppose from Lucas's silence he does not want the work in question But why doesn't he say so ? Contributors used in this fashion fall to the ground Pray write and tell me some news Is it true that 'Once a Week' is dead ? Is the 'Times' defunct ? Send to Milan a paper or two of any kind with the latest news I shall see you I hope, in the latter end of August — The country about Meran is a great garden open to the South Arthur rests in one of the valleys more north and is making a collection of butterflies and beetles He is quite well and very much astonished at the smiles he meets in the houses His more poetical impressions he keeps to himself

To F M Evans

MERAN, July 1861

MY DEAR EVANS (FATHER AND SON !) — I have received the £20 forwarded here and right thankfully Your letter to Innsbruck has not reached me nor have I heard from Lucas

I shall see whether the long named banker at Innsbruck won't forward the money here otherwise I shall be put out of my route altogether

My walks of about 30 miles a day under a fiery sun have improved me, and I think I can go to work now for another nine months Have you any idea of what Lucas's intentions were concerning the Dyke Farm ?

I have an autobiographical story in view for O a W when Chapman's 3 vols are out of hand

That is if O a W survives For I know nothing and hear nothing Nobody sends me a 'Times' or a 'Punch' ! I am forgotten if I don't set to work all the

and Alps in the distance The Swiss fleece you with admirable gravity The great 'shots' of Stanz parade the town with their prizes in their hats I shall send you something shortly I am better already I shall soon be eager for work

To F M Evans

MERAN, SOUTH TYROL, AUSTRIA, 1861.

MY DEAR EVANS,—I wrote to you from Zurich, asking for £30 to be sent on immediately to Innsbruck It has not come I have calculated on it, and am therefore quite upset by the contretemps I have an idea that the letter cannot have reached you, or something is wrong I wrote to Chapman from Laudek, but am losing faith in letters So, to make sure, I write to you again Please send, on the day you get this, £20 to the Poste Restante, Meran, Sud Tyrol, Austria I am almost inclined to ask you to telegraph to a banker here to hand the money to me at the hotel, Graf v Meran The truth is I have made a mess of my money-arrangements and am here without any, dependent on a civil landlord for wherewithal to make merry abroad Don't fail to do something I wish Frederick would see Fred Chapman and hear what he has done If he has sent the money in time for it to reach me here on Monday, then please send £10 to Milan, Lombardy, Italy, Poste Restante—in a registered letter, or credit on a banker If he has delayed, or has not received my letter, then I don't object to the expense of a telegraph to a banker here, telling him to hand me the money at my hotel

In my letter from Zurich I wished you to tell me whether Lucas wanted the conclusion of the 'Dyke Farm' I left word for him to speak to that effect, in Bouvierie St What the deuce has come to you all?

the Rosanna The Rosanna by the way put me in mind of you—nay, sang of you with a mountain voice, somehow I don't know how. Perhaps because it is both hearty and gallant subtle and sea-green. You never saw so lovely a brawling torrent. Clear, ice-cold, foaming. You shall have the verses it inspired. Tell me. Would you like the dedication of my volume of Poems when it's ready? Say no if you feel no. For my part I feel the honour will be mine.

We walked from Innsbrück to Laudek in three days. W—— does not walk in rain or when it's to be apprehended, nor when there's a chance of nightfall nor does he like it in the heat and he's not the best hand in the world at getting up in the morning and he's rather excitable. But still thoroughly kind and good. So we did not come at a great rate. From Laudek we took three days and a quarter to Meran whence I write to you. The country is wonderful. Mountains holding up cups of snow to the fiery sun who glares on them in vain. The peasantry are a noble race pious and with a strong smell. Priests abound and soap flies before them. I sigh like Tannhäuser for the Venusberg. Now don't you think the writers of 'Tannhäuser' clever as they are and of marked poetic power should have waited till they wore off Tennyson somewhat? Such is my opinion. There was to be a review in the 'Times' Has it appeared?

Meran is southern in heat and luxury of growth of all kinds of fruits. The cicada goes all day like a factory wheel—poetic simile! The flies sting, and the sun is relentless. I begin to understand why Daphne fled into a laurel from the fiery fellow. Still I like sun as you do. Anything's better than the meagre days we got last year. This land abounds in falling waters brooks torrents all ice cold. We drank at the wells every ten

agencies of science. You write me contemptuously short business paragraphs It's clear to me that travelling is for great men alone. They have their country's eyes on them !

The bother is that if I only knew where Lucas is going to, I might come across him, and put something stronger than a pen to his breast to make him out with what he means.

Arthur is quite well. He is here, and a mighty traveller as you may suppose He says he is happy, and is catching butterflies.

To Captain Maxse

MERAN, SOUTH TYROL, July 26, 1861

MY DEAR MAXSE,—Is it you who send the poem 'Tannhauser'¹ to me here ? And why ? Do you think it very good ?—O my dear fellow ! I'll talk about that presently, but I wish you were with me or I with you for my companion 's a dear old boy, but we don't get on quite as travellers. And not only for that reason, but for many reasons, I want to see you, and shake your hand, and hear about your bubbles, and the life you go through In fact, I begin to feel that I must see you and have a very strong affection for you, if you don't mind hearing that much, O my shame-faced Briton !—Well, I^e fear I shall not meet you at Baden Baden, even if you go there. I have been thrown out by money-arrangements failing, letters missing, etc. I return by Botzen to Verona , thence to Milan, Turin, Dijon, Paris The dear little man is quite well, making a collection of Tyrolese butterflies and beetles. He is at Laudek, about 80 miles in the rear of us , at the junction of the Inn and

¹ 'Tannhauser, or the Battle of the Bards,' by Neville Temple (Julian Henry Charles Fane) and Edward Trevor (Edward Robert Bulwer Lytton, Earl of Lytton)

hand, the Passeyr on the other. We have a Schwimm bad here. The water is too cold for swimming. It stings. W—— goes to it in the morning and remains naked somewhere in the neighbourhood all day. Adventures we have had none. The old boy is very desponding about his circumstances, and he won't buckle up to brave them. I suppose he knows best so I say nothing.

My first sight of the Alps has raised odd feelings. Here at last seems something more than earth and visible, if not tangible. They have the whiteness, the silence the beauty and mystery of thoughts seldom unveiled within us but which conquer Earth when once they are. In fact they have made my creed tremble—Only for a time. They have merely dazzled me with a group of symbols. Our great error has been (the error of all religion as I fancy) to raise a spiritual system in antagonism to Nature. What though yonder Alp does touch the Heavens? Is it a rebuke to us below? In you and in me there may be lofty virgin points pure from what we call fleshliness. And so forth—W—— is lost in astonishment at me because I don't look out for a 'woman'. 'You're a pote and I can't think how a pote can get on without one. I'd go mad—Mrs W is very kind to Arthur, and really in love with the Irish Corsican. They spoon terribly. Perhaps I am getting old for I don't envy them though I feel a kind of emptiness—an uncared for feeling. A good friendship would satisfy me—You made an impression on Lady Duff. She likes you and takes to you altogether—How is it the Austrians get beaten by the French? A finer set of men than the Austrian soldiers you can't see anywhere. Their drill seems good. They don't expect war for some months. I hear Benedek has left Verona for Carlsbad.'

minutes, sat over the brooks naked legged, dipped our heads desperately. Here are crucifixes at every fifty yards. You go to a well and the pipe through which the water flows is through the body of a Christ. Hear you a droning noise on the wind, it issues from a body of peasants mumbling their rosaries as they march to work. They are invariably courteous. W—— says, they remind him more of the Spaniards than do any other people, but they have not the same prolonged gravity of deportment. Nothing can be grander than the colossal mountains of porphyry and dolomite shining purple and rosy, snow-capped here and there, with some tumultuous river noising below, and that eternal stillness overhead, save when some great peak gathers the thunders and bellows for a time. Then to see the white sulphurous masks curl and cover round it, and drip moisture on the hanging meadows, would task your powers of description, O my friend !

Do our loves prosper ?

‘ Life is real—life is earnest !
Tiddle lol de lol de lol ’

But I wish you would fix soon, for as I told you, and as you feel, time goes, and the wheel is pleasant, but if you keep on the wheel you are grey before you know, and then the past looks horribly empty. Heigho ! I have Art to solace me. If I saw you stick to that I would not preach. My health is better. I can do 30 miles per diem under this sun, without knocking up. Nevertheless the nerves are not yet right. One good sign is that I am very anxious to finish my ‘ *Emilia* ’, and have gentle prickings about other matters in my mind.

Meran is a glorious place. We look towards Italy. The country is like a garden. The Adige flows on one

on one shoulder her head slightly lying on her neck, her drooped eyelids mournfully seeming to say 'No no never ! tho I am dying to be wedded to that wish of yours and would stake my soul I have divined it ! — wasn't it charming ? This too, so intensely human from a figure vaporous, but half discernible !

I have been alone with Arthur in Venice which was a blessing for somehow or other dear old W—— isn't at all the right sort of companion He says he thinks it's his stomach I tell him that it is not fair for a man to throw his stomach in one's face The fact is the dear old boy (meaning excellently) is irritable exceedingly tiffs twenty times a day, and now and then a sulk Then ensues reconciliation Mardith ! I don't mind saying I'm sorry ! and ye can judge of me affection for ye when ye see I don't hesitate to sacrifice me pride, etc He owns still he thinks me in the wrong when the next occasion recurs You may imagine this sort of schoolboy business is not to my taste When one does meet a woman it's better to have her in petticoats — Here (in Milan) I met him again He went last night to see his mother on Lake Como, at the Villa d'Este I go to him to-morrow Next day I trust homeward by way of the Mont Cenis to Paris I shall rest in Paris a day or two, according to the state of my funds Will you write to me there, Poste Restante I want to know where I can see you in London for I have an immense longing to wring your hand I will accept a dinner That is to say a dish of fish, an English steal and no wine I am much better in health but you see I have been somewhat disappointed about the management of Arthur I have been able to get only one week's walk and the rest of the time the little fellow has been on my hands But what a jolly boy and capital companion he is ! Full of fun and observation, good temper and

Write to me, Poste Restante, Milan, Lombardy, Italy,
and don't fast, there's a dear fellow —Your faithful,
GEORGE MEREDITH

To Captain Maxse

MILAN, August 16, 1861.

MY DEAR MAXSE,—Behold a pretty picture, which is to tell you I have been in Venice, which you know so well, which is a dream and a seduction to the soul of me I wish you had been there with me —Now, mark the Campanile above, for you are to have it reproduced one day in illustrious verse. There did I conceive an Ode —I have followed Byron's and Shelley's footsteps there (in Venice) on the Lido Do you remember in 'Julian and Maddalo,' where the two, looking towards the Euganean hills, see the great bell of the Insane Asylum swing in the sunset? I found the exact spot I have seldom felt melancholy so strongly as when standing there You know I despise melancholy, but the feeling came I love both those poets, and with my heart given to them I felt as if I stood in a dead and useless time So are we played with sometimes! At that hour your heart was bursting with a new passion, and the past was as smoke flitting away from a fired-off old contemptible gun Well, I walked the Lido every day, and bathed with my little man in the tepid Adriatic, and floated through the streets in my gondola, and received charming salutes from barred windows. from one notably where a very pretty damsel, lost in languor, hung with her loose-robed bosom against the iron, and pressed amorously to see me pass, till she could no further I meantime issued order to Lorenzo, my gondolier, to return, and lo, as I came slowly into view she as slowly arranged her sweet shape to be seen decently, and so stood, but half a pace in the recess, with one dear hand

poor, matched with the subject To my mind the best parts are the departure of the pilgrims, and the return, especially that of the one being questioned The filing by of the procession reminds me of the main point in V Hugo's ballad 'Les Cymbaliers du Roi' On re-reading the poem I am confirmed in a clozed sensation I first experienced The alliteration is really so persistent that the ears feel as if they had been horribly drummed on Power of narrative, I see Mimetic power of a wonderful kind, and flow of verse also extraordinary I am not touched by any new music in it I do not find any comprehension of human nature, or observation or sympathy with it I perceive none of the subtleties deep but unobtrusive that show that a mind has travelled Great windy phrases, and what I must term (for so they hit my sense) encaustic imageries do not satisfy me any longer, though I remember a period when they did The passage

Or shall I call you men or beasts ?

praised by the *Times* ' shows the Muse puff checked and Elizabeth ridiculous The scene was managed in order to bring her out It does so with a vengeance Don't you see how ill in accordance with the little bit of idea one gets of Elizabeth this is ? She may be vehement without acting the virago Such a creature would not have commenced with invective she might have heated herself up to it entreaty self abandonment unconscious declarations of her love for the object of their wrath in unmeasured praise of him excuse of him, etc then when her words seem not to be producing their effect then a fiery hue, if you like But how stagey is the
Or shall I call you, etc ! And this is the thing that attracts you ?

Something better has done that Well I will tell you

endurance. The tour has sown much fine stuff in him, but I am anxious at last to have him home As for me, I believe I shall now be in condition for labour of the remunerative kind The novelty has been worth the money in all ways Could I but afford to rest and look on man for one year! Non è possibile —You must see Arthur's Diary He is at it now, at my elbow.

Yes! those bleeding, tortured images by the wayside were painful and became exasperating—almost as much so as the sight of the crowds of white coats through the whole of the Venetian territory In Verona they have a garrison of 45,000 men The population numbers 60,000 The soldiers have to keep to themselves, the officers are cut, and nothing so miserable and menacing can be fancied Even the girls won't be spoken to. I saw an amusing scene of a couple of officers after two, who led them a terrible round and finally drew up at a melon-seller's There they began chattering, wouldn't let Mr Ober-lieutenant get in a word ; suddenly they turned round, fired a volley of contempt and virtuous indignation and retired into the applauding crowd. When Venus turns against Mars what shall the poor devil do? Better doff his casque—Now about 'Tannhauser' I think the review in the 'Times' stupid. It's just a blow of the trumpet The poem is a failure, and the young men ought to have been told so It fails, because the central point (in action), the 'Battle,' is absurdly weak, even to silliness because the theme, which is so glorious, is spoilt, in order to cry up and preach a sort of cherubim chastity popular just now, and which is not the real thing because it has no character, even done in outline It contains, I think, no image, or scene, that the mind clings to I don't care much for the passages you point out—'a drooping harebell' is in the 'Princess.' The revelation of Venus is

are on the highest pinnacles and may remain untouched, whatever is said or done You will have pains and aches —agonies to go through They serve to strengthen you —God bless you my dear Maxie! Believe me your faithful and affectionate

GEORGE MEREDITH

I shall be in Paris about the 21st or 22nd, or 23rd
Please write when you get this

Did you get the Pomo I sent?

To Mrs Janet Ross (from Arthur G. Meredith)

CORSHAM COTTAGE Sept. 2. 1861

MY DEAR JANET—I was very much pleased to receive your letter but I am very sorry you are not well Zillah goes to school with me and I like it very much Pat a little while ago went into the water to fetch sticks but Jessy spoilt him by catching hold of his ear and tried to make him dive Jessy is a much better dog than Pat Our gardens are getting on very well I have got a lot of pens for seed and some beetroot almost ready to dig up About three months ago I went on the continent with my papa I started from Dover to Ostend and going in the harbour I saw some Belgian peasants picking perywinkles, they laughed at us and had such rosy cheeks and I thought them very funny Then I had a long day in the train from Ostend to Coblenz In the morning I saw a steamer going to Mainz and so we dressed and got in it On each side of the Rhine there are mountains that have old castles on them where robber knights used to live and there was the Lurli rock, they fired a gun and there were three echoes In the morning the waiter at Mentz took me upstairs to a high place and showed me a stork's nest built in a chimney I went from Mentz to Zurich where

what I think. You know I wish very earnestly to see you, a man made to understand and make happy any pure, good woman, married to one I don't think any son owes his parents more than the conscientious assurance that he has clearly thought over what he is about to do (in such a matter), seeing that men are the only possible judges in the case, and that the stake is all their own To have found a suitable person, and to give her up for anything on earth is like seeing a jewel on the shore and rejecting it on account of the trouble of conveying it home But do you strongly recognise the jewel? Have you found her? A boy can't, but a man must reason, in these cases. You may know your love from its power of persisting and bearing delay Passion has not these powers If your love of this person is true and not one of your fancies, it will soon light you clear enough . . And don't be hasty and think you are trusting your instinct by grasping suddenly at the golden apple Can you bear poverty for her? Will she for you? Can she, even if she would? Think whether you are risking it, and remember that very few women bear it and retain their delicacy and charm. Some do Can you think her one of the chosen? The great difficulty is to be honest with ourselves If there comes a doubt, the wave of passion overwhelms it Try and listen to your doubt See whether you feel, not what we call love, but tenderness for her Satisfy yourself on this point And then determine to wait You can, if your heart has conceived real tenderness If not, should you marry her? You speak of securing her. You may secure her person, but how can you be yet sure of more? If continually you find her worthier, fix your mind to win her by the force of your love Then should you have that divine delight, I ask you whether you can see any earthly obstacle in your way? You

Italian pictures Then I went home I remain my dear Janet your affectionate friend, ARTHUR G MEREDITH

Note in George Meredith's writing —

This is entirely as you would wish it to be—the small man's own I bearing the stamp thereof He will have a lot more of it to tell you when he has you by the ear

Written on the back of the foregoing letter —

MY DEAR GOOD JANET—Forgive me I have been going to write you an account of the Travels of self and son but I am now so torn to pieces and hard at work that I can't sit down to anything Your letter was based on false intelligence my dear It was perfectly right of you to take up the case as you did I am glad you like me well enough to do so Be sure I would not miss your friendship for much and would stoop my pride for it even if that stood in the way As it is there is no feeling of the sort God bless you I will write fully in a few days —I saw your father two or three days back He is looking as ever In health I also am better Arthur is now at Weybridge seeing his mother daily —Your ever faithful and affectionate

GEORGE M

To a Friend

ESHER.

As to the temptation it was Eve's own doing born of champagne and the promptings of her blood She is a well meaning girl Be kind to her Do not grow ironical Forbear from satire at tender intervals Make her believe (she will so readily!) that she is never ridiculous or that you never see it which is a subtler flattery for woman is cute and would rather that you should have the bandage on your eyes than that she should

the lake of Zurich was so clear that you could see to the bottom of it The next day I went up part of a mountain and dined, and I saw the Alps at a distance, there was a crow which came hopping along and was quite tame, but another boy teased it, and so it flew away.

From Zurich I went to Munich and I crossed lake Constance Coming in the harbour I saw a statue of a lion in the water I stopped at Munich a day and at twelve o'clock I heard a nice band The Bavarian soldiers dress is blue which looks very pretty. There is a beautiful palace at Munich I went into a beautiful garden called the English garden were I saw some fire flies which show a green light. From Munich I went to Innsbruck were there was a church with bronze kings and queens surrounding the Emperor Maximilian and I saw the tomb of Andreas Hofer I went up to some high gardens and had a view of Innsbruck From Innsbruck I went to Laudeck were I caught some very pretty butterflys from Laudeck I went to Meran were there are castles I went to schloss Labenberg and Schloss Guin were there was a nice man and I bathed in the Passier From Meran I went to Verona and I went to Venice were I was very happy I went about in gondolas in the canals and bathed at the Liedo the water is so hot that you can stopp in a long while I dine at tables d'hote and had my own bottle of wine, lots of grapes, and lemonade on the place St Mark I went in the place of St Mark were there were some pictures I went from Venice to Milan and went into the great cathedral from Milan I went to Paris, over the Mount Cenis, I liked going over At Paris I had breakfast at cafés I went to the Champs Elysees I saw the monument of Napoleon on which were the battles he fought I went in the Louve palace were there were some beautiful

cheerful outlook upon the world and a keen sense of humour mated moreover with a lady in whom personal beauty was combined with musical tastes and rare personal charm his hospitality was a welcome social tonic and close lifelong friendship resulted

To William Hardman

CORSHAM ESSEX 1861

MY DEAR HARDMAN,—Most certainly I will come with very great pleasure bringing my bag to show that I am in earnest about a bed By the way do you know it is dangerous to ask poets to sleep at a house ? You ask them to dine never to sleep for if you do so it means they are only to be got rid of by a ruse Numerous cases might be cited How, if I tax your ingenuity ?

I see 'The Silver Cord'¹ reviewed in the 'Saturday' and as I think fairly But it is a question whether Brooks is still young enough to feel that Please do not spare him yourself but put him on his mettle and his next work will be capital

I am exceedingly sorry to lose you both I can only hope that you will whenever you think proper, come to this humble place as frankly as I accept the opening to your

HOSPITABLE TOWN MANSION :

6 o'clock is an excellent hour and I have just enough faith in my appetite and honour to say that I will be punctual

My little man says he hopes he shall see you and Mrs Hardman here soon He also mutters something about 'Pantomime' which I cannot comprehend We both send greetings to Mrs Hardman whose behaviour in the boat let me add has proved her to be a companion of men

¹ *The Silver Chord* by C W Shirley Brooks (London Bradbury and Evans 1861)

To William Hardman

COPSHAM, Oct 19, 1861.

MY DEAR HARDMAN,—How can I thank you for the trouble you take! Your friend Holroyd's opinion is worth having and will be serviceable. I received the *Cartes-de-visite* on the day I was quitting Copsham for Suffolk, the 'Giles' of Counties I always think, where I lived in a dumpling state for a week. When I entered the world again I found that one had quitted it who bore my name and this filled my mind with melancholy recollections which I rarely give way to. My dear boy, fortunately, will not feel the blow, as he might have under different circumstances. I tell you this to excuse myself for my silence. I will come to-morrow, if you please. I have an engagement in town to-night, which necessitates a tail coat, so do not be frightened when you see me, nor stand in awe, nor strive to emulate. I hope for music for which I have a great longing.

I am engaged getting ready a volume of poems. If I had a piano, and my rooms here were only a little bigger than yourself and Mrs Hardman, I would have the audacity to ask you to come. The dread of my soul is the evening! How shall a poor guest be amused here? Yet is November fine a great observer, old, shrewd, unerring, said to me once—'I always take my holidays in November, being sure of a greater number of clear, fine days than in any other month.' I corroborate. Think over this and communicate with me. To Mrs Hardman I could say that in November, she being well wrapped up, might even enjoy the late autumn sunshine.

William Hardman, a barrister, subsequently chairman of Surrey quarter-sessions, and later editor of the *Morning Post*, had lately taken for one summer a country cottage near Esher. Widely read, with a large circle of friends, a

other save practical work. I have no doubt that it has done me good though the pleasure your letter gives me and let me say also the impetus is a proof that I should have flourished better under a less rigorous system.

If you do me the favour to look at 'Once a Week' during the next two months you will see some poems of mine that are of another cast. The 'Cassandra' you will see, is as severe in rhythm as you could wish. But one result of my hard education since the publication of my boy's book in '51 (those poems were written before I was twenty) has been that I rarely write save from the suggestion of something actually observed. I mean that I rarely write verse. Thus my Jugglers Beggars etc I have met on the road and have idealized but slightly I desire to strike the poetic spark out of absolute human clay. And in doing so I have the fancy that I do solid work—better than a carol in mid air. Note the 'Old Chartist' and the 'Patriot Engineer' that will also appear in 'Once a Week'. They may not please you but I think you will admit that they have a truth condensed in them. They are flints perhaps and not flowers. Well I think of publishing a volume of Poems in the beginning of '62 and I will bring as many flowers to it as I can. It may be that in a year or two I shall find time for a full sustained Song. Of course I do not think of binding down the Muse to the study of facts. That is but a part of her work. The worst is that having taken to prose delineations of character and life, one's affections are divided. I have now a prose damsel crying out to me to have her history completed and the creatures of a novel are bubbling up and in truth being a servant of the public I must wait till my master commands before I take seriously to singing.

This is a long letter for a man to write about himself and it is the first time I have been guilty of such a thing.

To the Rev. Augustus Jessopp ¹

COPSHAM COTTAGE, ESHER,
SURREY, Nov 13, 1861.

MY DEAR SIR,—I have received your letter. Let me tell you at once that I feel it to be most generous, and I should be glad to think I deserved such hearty praise as fully as I do the censure. But on that point, I must be allowed to give you two or three words of explanation. Apropos of the 'Rosanna,' it was written from the Tyrol, to a friend, and was simply a piece of friendly play. Which should not have been published, you add? Perhaps not, but it pleased my friend, and the short passage of description was a literal transcript of the scene. Moreover, though the style is open to blame, there is an idea running through the verses, which, while I was rallying my friend, I conceived to have some point for a larger audience.

It is true that I have fallen from what I once hoped to do. The fault is hardly mine Do you know Vexation, the slayer? There is very little poetry to be done when one is severely and incessantly harassed My nerves have given way under it, and it is only by great care and attention to the directions of my doctor, that I can work at all—I have now more leisure and somewhat better health, and the result is, that I have gone back partially to my old mistress

As to my love for the Muse, I really think that is earnest enough I have all my life done battle in her behalf, and should, at one time, have felt no blessing to be equal to the liberty to serve her. Praise sings strangely in my ears I have been virtually propelled into a practical turn, by the lack of encouragement for any

¹ Headmaster of King Edward VI Grammar School, Norwich, later, Canon of Norwich Author of *One Generation of a Norfolk House*, *Trials of a Country Parson* etc

excellent P G performance and no more. You will see He is in new chambers full of pictures Old Masters we hear. For a fine putative Leonardo he disbursed recently £400. And Sir Charles Eastlake said—never mind what Then too a Masaccio for which he gave £19 7s 6 $\frac{3}{4}$ d was Exhibited at the British Institution and the papers took note of nothing else. And Sir Charles Eastlake said—as before

H—— is a good old boy. He has a pleasant way of being inquisitive and has already informed me quite agreeably that I am a gentleman though I may not have been born one. Some men are always shooting about you like May flies in little quick darts to see how near you they may come. The best thing is to smile and enjoy the fun of it. I confess a private preference for friends who are not thus afflicted and get the secret by instinct. As my Janet does for instance —The dear indifferent Bart I meet occasionally in the train or on lonely Celia looking as if he bore with life but had not the exact reason for his philosophy handy. He speaks out like a man concerning your husband and I should wish every husband to have a father in law who appreciates him as heartily. Your Mother's Diary will not I suppose reach you before this letter. On the whole it is very hopeful. Secondly it is immensely amusing and shows her fine manly nature admirably. O what a gallant soul she is! and how very much I love her! I had only time during the passage of the train to read it and couldn't get to the end. As yet the voyage has wrought no cure but the change and the sea breeze and shaking have done good and produced favourable excitement. I have new friends whom I like and don't object to call by name. A Mr and Mrs Hardman I met in Esher this autumn. She is very pleasant, and is one of the rare women who don't find it necessary to fluster

It has not been possible for me to reply to you in any other way.

I will conclude by saying that, whenever you are in London, if you are to visit me, it will give me great pleasure to welcome you I must warn you that my cottage has very much the appearance of a natural product of the common on which it stands, 'far from resort of men' But I can give you a bed and good cookery, of its kind. In the winter it will be difficult to tempt friends to meet you In the summer they find the place pleasant, and believe me, I shall hold it an honour if you will take rank among them

To Miss Janet Ross

COPSHAM, ESHER, Nov. 19, 1861.

MY VERY DEAR JANET,—I plead ill health. I plead vexation, occupation, general insufficiency: I plead absence from home, absence from my proper mind, and a multitude of things. and now I am going to pay my debts. But are not my letters really three single gentlemen rolled into one? This shall count for ten Now the truth is that my Janet is, by her poet at least, much more thought of when he doesn't write to her than when he does. Vulgar comparisons being always the most pungent, I will say, Lo, the Epicurean to whom his feast is still in prospect he dreams of it it rises before him in a thousand hues and salutes his nostril with scents heavenly He dines 'Tis gone 'Tis in the past and with it go his rosy visions—Your P G, to wit H—, I saw him the other day, and shall probably dine with him on Thursday—Quoth I, at a period of our interview—Have you, O H— replied duly to the fair Alexandrienne? Then went he through much pantomime, during my just reproaches, and took your address—which may be an

Gondola and floated through the streets at night or out to Malamocco to get the fresh breeze A fresh Levant wind favoured our visit To the Lido we went every morning Arthur and I bathing—behold us for a solid hour under enormous straw hats floating and splashing in the delicious Adriatic The difficulty of getting him out of it was great Papa what a dear old place this is ! We won t go will we ? I met and made acquaintance with some nice fellows (Austrians) in the water The Italian fish are not to be found where they are Venice looks draped and wears her widow's weeds ostentatiously Our Gondolier Lorenzo, declared that he had seen Lor Burren when a boy Palazzo Mocenigo Signor Ecco ! On the Lido one thinks sadly of Byron and Shelley I found the spot Shelley speaks of in 'Julian and Maddalo' where he saw the Vicenza hills in the sunset through the bell tower where the lunatics abide on an island Of the glories of St Mark s who shall speak It is poetry my dear and will be expressed in no other way In Venice I learnt to love Giorgione Titian and Paul Veronese I cannot rank Tintoret with them (Ruskin puts him highest) though his single work shows greater grasp and stretch of soul Viennese crinoline and the tyrant white coat do their best to destroy the beauties of St Mark's Charming are the Venetian women ! They have a gracious walk and all the manner one dreams of as befitting them Should one smile on a Whitecoat she has the prospect of a patriotic dagger smiting her fair bosom and so she does not though the Austrians are fine men and red hot exclusiveness for an abstract idea sits not easy on any ladies of any land for longer than—say a fortnight Consequently Vienna sends Crinoline to her children I made acquaintance with a tough Baronne who had brought two daughters of immense circle ! How quietly the pretty

their sex under your nose eternally, in order to make you like them I gave her private's rank in Janet's Amazonian regiment, with chances of promotion Also he is a nice fellow a barrister who does photographs, of his friends principally. On the other hand, let me say, that I went (thinking of you solely) and was done the other day, and will send a copy to you immediately. It looks absurd, but I must conclude it faithful . . .

You have had particulars of our travels, at least, items Munich is a glorious city to pass through, and the Tyrol a wonderful country for the same I had, the truth is, a miserable walking companion. He couldn't walk in the sun he wouldn't walk after its setting the rain he shunned as if he had been dog-bitten—in fact, he was a double-knapsack on my back. Certainly the heat was tremendous The Tyrolean men are the handsomest I have seen: the women the ugliest. The Alps gave me shudderings of delight; but I did not see enough of them, and I can't bear being coop'd long in those mountain-guarded valleys; so I shot through them in two weeks, and then saw Italy for the first time, emerging by Adige, which the Austrians are fortifying continually. Verona lies just under the Alps, and is now less a City than a fortress You see nothing but white coats—who form the majority of the inhabitants. The little man¹ asked innumerable questions about the amphitheatre, and the gladiators, the shows, and the Roman customs Thence to Venice, where he and I were alone—W— parting for Como and his mother Our life in Venice was charming Only I had to watch the dear boy like tutor, governess, courier, in one, and couldn't get much to the pictures, for there was no use in victimising him and dragging him to see them, and I couldn't quit him at all We hired a

¹ Arthur.

swims capitally rides and drives well and will make a good hero's wife She scorns the English for their bad manners she told me 'The Emperor allows her £1000 a year her mother gets £2000 Vive l'Empereur !

Thence over the Mont Cenis to Paris The little man was in raptures at the thought of crossing the Alps He would barely close his eyes I had him in my arms in the coupe of the diligence and then he was starting up every instant shouting and crowing till dawn when I had no chance of getting him to sleep When we reached Macon at night I put him to bed and gave him a little weak coffee in bed He slept like a top till morning when to Paris, which you know Arthur was impatient to be home and cared little for Paris I gave him a dinner at Vefours and at the Trois Freres He appreciated it but longed for England Paris is delightful ! Under the circumstances with a remonstrating little man there was nothing for it but to return hastily Thank Heaven ! I got him home safe—a little worn but he soon got over that and has improved his young mind considerably The journey did me good I am much stronger and am beginning to be able to work much better but have to be careful

I have left Emilia Belloni untouched for months and my novel is where it was En revanche I am busy on Poems I think it possible I shall publish a small volume in the winter after Christmas I have had letters from strangers begging me to do so One man headmaster of a Grammar School,¹ writes a six page letter of remonstrance and eulogy concluding I have often said I wished to see 3 men before I died Humboldt who is gone Bunsen whom I had the fortune to meet and—— Guess my dear ! He says that the Enchantress scene in Rd Feverel made him ill for 24 hours and that he and

¹ Augustus Jessopp

Venetians eyed them ! The square of St Mark's is the great parade — The weather was fiery but we had no mosquitos — Milan is, for heat, next door to Pandemonium The view from the Cathedral you have heard of I went to Como to see W—, who was with Il Principessa She received me affably at the Villa— Villa Ciani, près d'Este She has a handsome daughter, fair as a highborn English girl, engaged then, and since married, to General T— Madame la Princesse will be Mdme la Princesse, and desires that she should hear it too, as I quickly discovered I grew in favour She has no difficulty in swallowing a compliment Quantity is all she asks for This is entre nous, for she entertained me, and indeed I was vastly entertained Look for it all in a future chapter A good gross compliment, fluently delivered, I find to be the best adapted to a Frenchwoman's taste If you hesitate, the flavour evaporates for them Be glib, and you may say what you please Should you in addition, be neat, and ready, they will fall in love with you Mademoiselle the fiancée, perceived that I was taken with her before I had felt it Hence she distinguished me, till the General came It's a real love match She wouldn't sing then—couldn't Nor did I press it for Oh !—She sings in the rapid French style all from the throat and such a hard metallic Giordigianic rang over Como's water as sure our dear old Muddy Mole never knew of ! Young Captain G—, T—'s aide-de-camp, and I, then fell upon the Princess

King Victor gave T— some royal Tokay, which he brought to the Villa, and we were merry over it I like G—, a very gallant fellow only 24, and served through the Hungarian revolt, and all the Garibaldian campaign

Before dinner we all bathed in Como, ladies and gentlemen ensemble Really pleasant and pastoral ! Mdlle

of half a dozen things but your mother's illness and inability to go to London prevented the likeliest I have sent books etc to Sir Alec to forward when he can Be sure my heart is very faithfully with you You know I approve of the man you have chosen so much that I pardon him his mortal offence — Talking of that Alice, who was P—— writes to her father from S of France that she 'thinks marriage a fine institution and wonders who invented it I heard this repeated before some men who thought it fast and clever — May all good be with you and yours !

Frederick Chapman is just married — Your book is being well reviewed I hope Lewis will do it in the 'Saturday'

To a Friend engaged to be married

COPSHAM ESHER SURREY 1861

MY DEAR —, 'Tannhauser' was in yesterday's 'Post' and exceedingly well done I read the extracts also They produce on me the effect after three lines of too much sugar on the palate something rich certainly but of a base richness I don't agree with you that they have brought Venus sensibly to the reader at all tho it's fair to say that with Elizabeth it is less so than Venus The former is a prim good miss a shrew when in a passion she quite justifies (to me) Tannhauser's choice of the dear voluptuous Goddess whom they call such naughty names, and who I begin to think is the favourite daughter of Mother Earth

This to you who are in love and well in love! — Do you know I have seldom seen anything with so much pleasure as your honest modest, manly love for her You don't tire me in telling me about it, and of your

his friends (Cambridge men) rank me next to Tennyson in poetic power · and so forth. I tell Janet this, because I know she will like to hear it · I listen to it merely as a sign that I am beginning to be a little known · The man praises my first book of verse, which I would have forgotten · 'Grandfather Bridgeman'—an idyll · true to English life, and containing a war episode, approved by friends who have heard it, 'The Old Chartist,' 'The Patriot Engineer,' 'Phantasy,' 'A Love-Match,' and 'Cassandra' (about to be illustrated by Rossetti), are among my later pieces · When these are out I shall set myself seriously to work on a long poem · For if I have the power to do it, why should I not? I am engaged in extra pot-boiling work, which enables me to do this; and besides I can sell my poems · What do you think? Speak on this point.

My housekeeper, good Miss Grange, has just had an offer from Claremont to go and attend the Princess Françoise · and I am afraid she 'll go, which will be a complete upset here · for she 's an invaluable person: excellent temper, spotless principles, indefatigable worker, no sex · thoughtful, prudent, and sensible · Where shall I get such another? Of course I can't advise her to stay · It 's a terrible bother —They have been hunting a little, but the Prince de Joinville has not yet returned from America, so not much is done in that way · What do you think of the Comte de Paris' step? I can excuse him better than his adviser · He was courteous and kind to me here (Maxse introduced me), and so I wish him well—and therefore well out of it —Let me hear what you think of Buckle, who has become a topic

My dear! the well is not empty, but the bucket kicks · I have some things to do before I speak of them, but I dare say I shall see you before I offer you your wedding present · I hate offering mere jewelry · I have thought

Some fair ones would have declined resolutely For my part I like simple gentle unpretending songs, and shall be always glad of the privilege of hearing them

Health somewhat better Working on poems You will find some alterations, much for the better, I think

Rossetti admires your beloved tho she has not green eyes and carrots which I tell him astonishes me

He sent me a book of MSS original poetry the other day and very fine are some of the things in it He is a poet without doubt He would please you more than I do or can for he deals with essential poetry and is not wild and bluff, and coarse but rich refined royal robed! Swinburne read me the other day his French novel *La Fille du Policeman* the funniest rampingest satire on French novelists dealing with English themes that you can imagine One chapter *Ce qui peut se passer dans un Cab Safety* where Lord Whitestick Bishop of Londres ravishes the heroine, is quite marvellous But he is not subtle and I don't see any internal centre from which springs anything that he does He will make a great name but whether he is to distinguish himself solidly as an Artist I would not willingly prognosticate

Rossetti is going to illustrate my *Cassandra*, which poem has taken his heart

I am obliged to make money as I can, to meet these new claims on me and so all my pieces must be published before they're collected Your name, you know may be withheld from the Dedication then if you please

feelings, and your thoughts about her. The fonder and the deeper your emotions reach, the more I see and admire the large nature you are gifted with

I trust it may be that Heaven brings the other half of her. She is, I am sure, a very sweet person. but how strong she is, or can be made, my instinct does not fathom. I am so miserably constituted now that I can't love a woman if I do not feel her soul, and that there is force therein to wrestle with the facts of life (called the Angel of the Lord) But I envy those who are attracted by what is given to the eye,—yes, even those who have a special taste for woman flesh, and thus or that particular little tit-bit—I envy them! It lasts not beyond an hour with me

Happy you with all the colour of life about you! Has she principle? Has she any sense of responsibility? Has she courage? Enough that you love her. I believe that this plan of taking a woman on the faith of a mighty wish for her, is the best, and the safest way to find the jewel we are all in search of As to love 'revealing' all the qualities in one great flash—do you believe it even in your present state? Still of so fair and exquisite a person it is just to augur hopefully, and when one comes to read her face, surely that is a book with plates of virgin silver. Well! of her face I will tell you, without trying to make you too happy, that I don't know any face the memory of which leaves with me the unique impression of music so completely. There is that softness in the curves, and purity of look, which move like music in my mind.

As to her singing qualities, that is another matter, and really I had forgotten But on coming to consider this, there's something right in one—a woman—who knows her capabilities to be not brilliant, sitting down to do her duty at the piano to pass the evening properly.

I have done a great deal of the 'Love Match' Rossetti says it's my best I contrast it mentally with yours, which is so very much better!

To Captain Maxse

LONDON 1861

MY DEAR MAXSE—I will come So shall the little man I hate wedding breakfasts which make one take wine and eat I don't know what at unholy seasons of the day and are such a stupid exhibition of the couple

Tell me when you think it may take place, that I may keep all clear for that day I'm sure you're going to be happy and I'm like Keats and the nightingale—'happy in your happiness'—I wonder now, whether any nice woman will ever look on me?—I certainly begin to feel new life Also a power of work, which means money There is evidently great folly kindling in me All the effect of example!

I have matters in hand which you will like I think They won't drag you down to the Roadside and the haunts of vagabonds!

How do you like de Stendhal? L'Amour ought not to be dissected and indeed can't be For when we've killed it with this object, the spirit flies and then where is L'Amour? Still I think de Stendhal very subtle and observant He goes over ground that I know Let me hear—I bow to your lovely bride The photograph is not just to her All blessings on you both!—Your loving,

GEORGE M

To the Rev Augustus Jessopp

COPSHAM COTTAGE ESHIE Nov 27

MY DEAR SIR—I know Souvestre tolerably well and have not hitherto cared much about him Some of his

To William Hardman.

ESHER, Nov. 25, 1861.

MY DEAR HARDMAN,—Stop! What do you mean by smoking $\frac{1}{2}$ a dozen cigars of the Holy Man in solitary enjoyment Give unto thy brother a chance of conversion, even upon Friday evening next And will you have my glove in Gordon Street? 'Twill save me 2s., which is, to a poet, no mean sum. I suppose Mrs Hardman has gone I hope she will not have trouble When she returns, may Copsham hail you both! We have all weathers here I am at my Pomes

PS—Did not the telegram read as if the Northerners had got another licking?

To Captain Marse.

CORSHAM, ESHER.

MY DEAR MAXSE,—You knew how glad it would make me to hear the good news, and I thank you for making me feel that she does not take you away from those who love you I don't think there will be a war I don't even think that the withdrawal of our Ambassador would give the signal for one. In any case there can be no reason why you should go Dismiss the notion. A war with France would tax all the energies of this country. All would have to serve. So be married quickly to that dear and sweet person who is to make you happy, I doubt not I look at her and should envy you, if I did not feel for her through your heart—I mean the photograph, which I prize—De Stendhal I have had to send to Paris for You will have 'L'Amour' in a week I told them (Hachette) to send it to you, from me Write as often as you can spare time Give her my kindest salute and know me, your loving

GEORGE M.

rate I think our sex ought to demand to have it sung as a piece of preliminary fair play —Your faithful

GEORGE MEREDITH

To the Rev Augustus Jessopp

CORSHAM COTTAGE,
Dec 20 1861

MY DEAR SIR —How happy you that have a Pallas ! I will not envy you I will hope that she also will visit me in the flesh She is not supposed to visit poets in the spirit

Apropos of her poetical counsel is she adapting her wisdom to the mind of the British matron, and of the snuffling moralist so powerful among us ? Does she know that my literary reputation is tabooed as worse than libertine in certain virtuous Societies ? that there have been meetings to banish me from book clubs ? And that Pater familiars has given Mr Mudie a very large bit of his petticoated mind concerning me ? —These are matters to be thought over In the way of Art I never stop to consider what is admissible to the narrow minds of the drawing room But is it well to call up what is marked for oblivion ? Isn't it a sort of challenge and an unnecessary one ?

I think I will not publish in Macmillan seeing that my volume is shortly to appear I have had a suggestion to that effect, once or twice from a brother in law of Macmillan's

I can only regret that the weather was so bad when you were with me and trust it will be brighter when you next do me the favour to come —Your faithful

GEORGE MEREDITH

Breton Sketches I have found repulsive. But I thank you for your edition, which has been forwarded to me in your name, and I will read the story you indicate

As I said, my cottage here is of the very humblest kind so much so that I hesitate to ask ladies to come to it, though there are some who do me that honour. You will find me about as plain a man as you could meet. I do not know many literary men myself those I do know are among the best. and they are not guilty of overbearing brilliancy at all.—unless, haply, one should be conscious of a sucking Boswell at the elbow, which is a rare case, and is possibly seductive. The general feeling is, that it is best to let 'good things' come as they may, and thus the best point of breeding attained: all have even chance, and one man does not draw a reputation at the expense of the others. Believe me, I have as great a respect for a good scholar, as you have for a man who writes books

To William Hardman.

COPSHAM, Dec 17, 1861

DEAR HARDMAN,—Rossetti talks of meeting good fellows on Thursday evening. Therefore, do not take stalls anywhere or make engagements till you are cock-sure you would not rather go to the artists. It has struck me that Schubert meant that words should be affixed to the Introduction to the Addio. A moment's reflection supplies them, e g.

tūm tūm tūm tūm dē tūm measure.

Don't you see it? With this warning, you and I and many a poor devil might have been on our guard. Perhaps safe! which to contemplate is wondrous. At any

it is better to hold back Picture it to yourself ! It is a very butchering of Cupid I presume you come on Saturday I had arranged for the Virtues to lunch here and for us to walk back with them and dine this Saturday It may be arranged a fortnight subsequently

Sons have been over to Oatlands His love is sent to Nellie but just at present I think she must consent to share it with Miss V who is in the ascendant

Jessopp comes next week He has asked me whether I taboo tobacco ? Fore God ! This is of noble augury ! What say you ?

To Mrs Janet Ross

COPSHAM COTTAGE
ESHER, Feb 15 1862

MY DEAR JANET — You come in April You are even now packing and preparing, and your heart is bounding for England So I will hope the best of you my dear child though your letters have saddened me and I see that your physical condition is lowered I never liked the climate for you though I perfectly approved of the husband After all it's merely a probation not a settlement There has been little hunting here this winter owing to the absence of the Princess of Orleans The weather is good for it the frosts are short, and the ground soft and wet and not too much so — Haven't you heard from the P G yet ? He said he would write, and abused his P G reputation, but I always have suspected him to have something of a woman's nature id est he must see a body to be with a body Now you can't say that of me ! What do you think (as the proof the other way) ? I was walking out with Hard man (the man being absent from his wife) and I commenced 'la—la—la—la— and so on ending la—

To Captain Maxse.

LONDON, Jan 1862.

MY DEAR MAXSE,—I send you a portion of proofs of the Tragedy of Modern Love. There are wanting to complete it, 13 more sonnets.

Please read, and let me have the honest judgment When done with, return This poem will come in the middle of the book

I called on Borthwick¹ to-day, but could not see him I shall call again to-day, if possible. If not, next week.

I say, you 'll review my Poems in the M. Post² You may flog me, too, if the prompting comes to do it.

I suppose the book will be out in six weeks.—Who was right about the Yankees?

How are you, my dear fellow? I feel rather anxious to know, and but that I 'm in such a mess and might stumble across some of your people, I would call.

By the way, tell me, do army men—ensigns, fight in undress uniform? Did any at Inkermann? Or is the full dress de rigueur?—Your faithful

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To William Hardman.

Jan 8, 1862.

MY DEAR HARDMAN,—Again cruel Fate has deferred the junction of our loving couple. He has got her cold, 'through sympathy,' he says. They communicate their tender impressions in sneezes Maurice you may remember, sings of 'Two red roses across the Moon,' but — seems to think that two red noses across a honeymoon would spoil the lustre of the orb. He may be right. On purely material grounds, and apart from sentiment, I should say that where a sneeze is to be apprehended

Algernon Borthwick—later Lord Glenesk, and owner of the *Morning Post*

race $\frac{1}{2}$ way to perdition and thinks of returning as far as he can before the final Trump shall sound to him

Last night came off the Raffle I record it Sons got the number 35 Yourself and Demitroia respectively 36 and 37 Wilford 18 Morison and spouse about 30 I think I had two throws, first 29 and second 41 The Granges 39 the Claremont people 38 Lo! G M is the winner of what he does not want at all So it happens! If Demitroia won't have the thing it shall go to Miss Grange

I hope to hear good news of Demitroia If not you can no longer as a man decline to open a vein and supply her from your abundance I confess I am astonished that you have not volunteered to do so —Your faithful

GEORGE MEREDITH

To the Rev Augustus Jessopp

ESHER March 21 1862

MY DEAR MR JESSOPP — My boy thanks you heartily for the bool of verse He delays to write himself, he says until he has read it through and can speak sagely on the subject Of this you will approve — He let me tell you is not a George but is 'Arthur Gryffydd — I must say I think the selection very Patmorian but it's a pleasant book for a boy and this little man reads it with pleasure The sentimental pieces of course affect him the least for he is a natural fellow and I never trouble the roots of him Dibdin is almost his favourite he recites the lines on Sir Sidney Smith gleefully

Apropos of Praxaspes, shame on me! I had to hunt him up My old impression of him and my new differ Duty is a fine heroic business but a man should be a slave to nothing P was a slave to his conception of this virtue What! he serves the man who slaughters his son he takes pride in being faithful to the dynasty of

la-la-ti-to-te ! ' in my fine voice, when he cried ' Halloa ! ' and I meekly responded ' That 's my spooney song ' ' And it 's mine ! ' quoth he ' The song that always made me sentimental,' said I ' The song that bowled me over,' said he I told him with a yawn (noble manhood's mask for a sigh), that I had written words to it. He and his wife petition for them So, please, to spare me from having to write fresh ones, send me, if you have them, a copy of my lines to Schubert's *Adieu* If you have any objection don't do it

Maxse is not the man you saw with me in Esher. That was Fitzgerald Maxse is quite a different fellow He performed the celebrated ride in the Crimea, as Lord Lyons' aide-de-camp ! . . . By the way, I write for the ' Morning Post ' now at odd hours, which pays your poet And I 've a volume of poems coming out in three weeks but I won't send the volume. You shall have it when you come Jessopp, the man I spoke of as liking my works, has been here—did I tell you ? He begged to be allowed to educate Arthur at his own expense, and under his own supervision The kindness was great, but I could not let him be at the charge while I have power to work, you know I like him very much and so would you Can you meet him in Paris ? Nothing would please me better But I fear I can't leave my pen Borthwick promises me introductions there It would be pleasant, I will see. . . —Your faithful

GEORGE M

To William Hardman

CORSHAM, March 17, 1862.

MY DEAR HARDMAN,—You are well out of this weather Myself am in appearance much like the atmosphere ; in sentiment I am due East King Aeolus holds his court within me I feel as one who has run a gallant

To William Hardman

March 25 1862

MY DEAR HARDMAN,—Please do not expect me positively to morrow I may call on Thursday but what I want to do is to go with you and Demitroia to the Monday Popular Concerts to hear Joachim and music, since your infernal alterations stop all that at home And yet supposing I am weak and come to morrow! You may turn me back from the door without giving offence for I shall know I have deserved it and I shall have the imperial luxury of one who from the couch of indolence, surveys the Realms of Bliss

By the way a letter from Alexandria My Janet refuses to give the verses unless I stringently insist for says she, 'they were composed for me and me alone and I don't want to lose the sense of their being peculiar to myself Can I insist?—I must even write Demitaunton a new set of verse

PS—I really think I shall come But don't expect me

To William Hardman

April 22 1862

MY DEAR HARDMAN—Thanks for your services I let the thing pass Let the public drive me to a 2nd edition if they want further alterations

Friendliest Tuck! I dine with you at the hour you please to name on Thursday You will decide about Chapman It's a matter of policy simply Let me know If we dissipate subsequently we should dine at 5 30—if not at 6

I say! Poor dear old Morison! I suppose you have heard of his purl? Horse went down with him on high road and precipitated the horse and St Bernard in the

a madman!—I give my sympathies to the persecuted Magi

Praxaspes might be cast in the form of a monologue. But, you see I am on the other side.

Does Mrs. Jessopp really mean to visit me? Does she know the sort of place she will be coming to? She will do me great honour and make me very happy, but I desire that she be distinctly aware of what she must undergo in a hut—for this roof that covers me is nothing more. Does she not travel in Switzerland?—She can then rough hardship—Let me know when I may expect you, if you hold by this good resolve.

My book hangs a little I am sick of the sight of it A council of friends say that the Rosanna poem must be published, as embodying something of me!—Of the old volume nothing will appear

To William Hardman

March 24, 1862

DEAR FRIEND,—I feel for you in your profound affliction. Has she returned? Pardon my asking. You break out beautifully into dishes and show a lovely and most becoming bravado . . . ‘And every dog shall have his day,’ Old Song

Morison¹ did not come. He was right. But, oh, what a day this day! How I wish you were here to wander about. The smell of the earth is Elysian. I am really not tauntin’ you. On Wednesday I will come to your desolate household if the South wind does not blow—with what different feelings—Your ever faithful

GEORGE MEREDITH

Bill for fly to Oatlands 5/- just come in I promised to tell you, and I am a man of my word.

¹ James Cotter Morison, familiarly termed ‘St. Bernard,’ author of a *Life of St. Bernard*, and later of *The Service of Man*, etc.

vessels I plead with Charles Lamb, 'Lance, and a coward —The whole business affects the imagination awfully but in reality an old sea fight was a far bloodier business Science I presume, will at last put it to our option whether we will improve one another from off the face of the globe, and we must decide by our common sense

Read John Mill on 'Liberty' the other day and recommend it to you It is a splendid protest against the tyranny society is beginning to exercise, very noble and brave

The book will be out the Monday after Easter I sent with Borthwick as many of the proofs as I could collect thinking you would have no time to review in Rome But, if you have not done it let me beg you to be in no hurry The book can wait You will find one or two poems that you have not seen The 'Ode to the Spirit of Earth in Autumn' may please you

I heard from Borthwick of the Violet's charming adventure with the Emperor and can picture it

What you say about Christianity arresting sensualism is very well but the Essenian parentage of Christianity was simply asceticism Hitherto human nature has marched through the conflict of extremes With the general growth of reason it will be possible to choose a path mid way Paganism no doubt deserved the ascetic reproof, but Christianity failed to supply much that it destroyed Pompeii as being artistically a Grecian Colony merely, cannot represent the higher development of Paganism

Alas! I fear I shall not join you in Venice —By the way take care to get an introduction to Rawdon Brown while there He has lived and worked at the Archives in Venice for 20 years, and can tell you more of the place than any other man I hear he is also a good fellow

dust, which was nearly stopping flow of same. All's well that ends well ! But one feels one likes him warmly when there is a note of danger He has been shaken considerably—had a slight fever, and is without his strength, though he managed to walk to me yesterday. I walked back with him. He had to take fly at Walton station.

To Captain Maxse.

COPSHAM, ESHER.

Is it the same sky over us ? Mine is of the grimdest grey, with a fog-lining The daffodil in the meadow has been nodding to this genial wind for the last two weeks. and now we have the pen-bird heralding the cuckoo, and I suppose summer is coming . but we are all in suspense to know whether we are to get a daily ducking or live the life of non-purgatorial beings through the months. Last Sunday there was a puff of sunshine I walked with a couple of fellows to Box Hill. What changes since last year ! I looked over the hilly Dorking road we traversed It wound away for other footsteps Well !—you at least have nothing to regret I hope the sunshine will cling to you.

The Naples correspondent of the 'Times' gives a horrible account of the state of the country, and rather alarms one about you · but having so precious a charge to protect you won't be rash, I 'm sure—Of course, you have heard all about the Monitor and Merrimac. A pretty business sea-fighting comes to ! Was there ever so devilish an entertainment ! Blood bursting from the eyes and ears of the men at the guns, who seemed to be under the obligation of knocking their own senses to atoms as a preliminary to sending the souls of their foes to perdition. If they want me to go 'on board such

certain again!—Book to be delivered this evening or
to morrow Has subscribed wonderfully well In spite
of all—Your loving

GEORGE M

To William Hardman

COPSHAM May 5 1862

MADRIGAL

Since Tuck is Faithless Found

Since Tuck is faithless found no more
I'll trust to man or maid,
I'll sit me down, a hermit hoar
Alone in Copsham shade

The sight of all I shun
Far spying from the mound
I'll be at home no more
Since Tuck
Since Tu a tu a tu a
Tuia Tuck
Since Tuck is faithless found

Oh! what a glorious day I have done lots of Emilia,
and am now off to Ripley or St Demitroia hill, or Tuck's
Height carolling I snap my fingers at you And yet
dear Tuck what would I give to have you here The
gorse is all ablaze the meadows are glorious—green
humming all day Nightingales throng Heaven blessed
blue amorous Heaven is hard at work upon our fair
wanton darling old naughty Mother Earth

Come dear Tuck and quickly, or I must love a woman
and be ruined Answer me grievous man!

In thine ear!—Asparagus is ripe at Ripley In haste
—Your constantly loving friend

GEORGE M

Pray, give my kindest regards to your Cecilia. I am flattered to hear that Englishmen stand so high with her now that she can make comparisons — Write soon ; and know me ever, your faithful

GEORGE M

In Venice read ' Julian and Maddalo ' It is one of Shelley's best : admirable for simplicity of style, ease, beauty of description and local truth The philosophy, of course, you may pass.

To William Hardman.

May 2, 1862

Such Weather.

And at Copsham no Tuck !

Anathema !

Spoken by the poet on receiving
Tuck's

Card May 2nd, 1862.

' May his company find him utterly dull, and he his
company !

' May he hear good things and not comprehend them !

' May he long in anguish to laugh, and when the laugh
comes, may he forget the cause thereof, and go seeking
for it, for the remainder of his years, with the aspect of
such a seeker !

' May Demitroïa exclaim, " I am of a different opinion
from William " !!!'

(Climax attained.)

(Close of Anathema)

Went to Exhibition on opening Day with Borthwick
Crush. Saw everything . . . Dined with Morison and
Hicks, and drank Hocks, etc Anticipated seeing you,
cock-certain, to-morrow Will never believe your cock-

Hants Hogs Back Mon Dieu ! And no Tuck near !
 To Demitrola all kindness — Still (through weakness of
 resolve) your loving

GEORGE M

To William Hardman

CORNHAM May 18 1802.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q What is a continual feast ?

A A day given up to Tuck

Q Why am I of a most vigorous capacity of digestion ?

A Because I never can have too much of Tuck

Q Is it true that an Alderman before he finishes his day must necessarily take a bracing walk ?

A Necessarily so for he makes the circuit of Tuck !

Confound the Press for its impudence in calling me the pupil of anybody ! Never mind if we do but get the public ear Oh, my dear old boy !—I rejoice to think that I may soon have you but grieve for Demitrola Come on Tuesday if you can cause Wednesday is the day before Black Thursday when George Pegasus, Esq goes into harness and understands what donkeys feel when they are driven Also arrange if it seemeth fit to you for a walk with Hinchliffe, or alone for Saturday next or arrange to come to me As you will

Gathering up my soul in its might I say (and damn all consequences) my love to Demitrola ! Thero !

GEORGE M

To Captain Maxse

CORNHAM ESHER June 9 1802.

MY DEAR MAXSE—I look about vainly for a long letter already written to you but it's as good as nowhere I must trust you to know yourself constantly in my thoughts But I feel that you are quite at peace

To William Hardman.

COPSHAM HERMITAGE, May 6, 1862.

I dare say! You know how badly you have behaved, and now you praise the poet and cajole the man! Is it Tuck that sends me a letter of this kind?—Not a word of repentance for a promise foully broken No appointment for—or let me say, expression of humble desire, to receive pardon of, Copsham in the flesh next Saturday. I won't come to you on Tuesday. I will emit fresh Anathemas! Read next page, or no; rhyme is more kindly.

Tune 'Johnny's too late for the Fair'

Tuck! Tuck! Once you would flatter me,
Saying that I in due season should fatter be
Here is Asparagus—what can the matter be?
Why don't you join in the Fair?

Ripley's the place with the jolly old Talbot Inn,
Once we two passed there, you know, and were all but
in.

Rhyme now commands me to throw here a small 'but'
in
Why don't you join in the Fair?

I saw the Japanese at the Exhibition on Thursday last. This Thursday I dine with the 'Once a Week' people, and shall ask Hamilton for a bed¹ I won't come to you unless I can be more with you. Now, please come down for some days in this magnificent weather. The nightingales are at their best. I went to see St Demitroïa's Hill yesterday, and saw the great Irrational—the Crystal, Walford's Domicile, Harrow, Windsor, Berks, Bucks,

¹ N E S A Hamilton of the MSS Department, British Museum, 1852-1872, author of *The Shakespearean Question*, 1860

side poems but discard 'Modern Love' which I admit, requires thought, and discernment, and reading more than once. The Saturday R has not yet spoken. One paper calls me a genius—one, a meretricious clever bold man. I find to my annoyance that I am susceptible to remarks on my poems and criticisms from whipsters or women absolutely male me wince and flush. I saw Robert Browning the other day, and he expressed himself 'astounded at the originality delighted with the naturalness and beauty —Pardon my egotism—I write to please you !

I have not yet seen Gibson's Venus. I went to the Int Ex on the opening day—have delayed to go since. It was a poor unimpressive show. Fancy the Poet Laureate in the line of march !

June 13 —Your letter from Lucca —You complain of sun. The S W has been blowing since the middle of May, and this year has not yet known one day of sunshine — Rossetti is beginning to ask about your Lady to know when he may have a sitting. He dear fellow, is better—still somewhat shaken. Mention it not—he buried his MSS poems in his wife's coffin it is whispered. He his brother and Swinburne have taken a house (Sir T More's) at Chelsea a strange quaint grand old place, with an immense garden magnificent panelled staircases and rooms —a palace. I am to have a bedroom for my once a week visits. We shall have nice evenings there, and I hope you'll come —The Notices of my book are scarce worth sending. The 'Spectator' abuses me. The Athenæum mildly pats me on the back the

Parthenon blows a trumpet about me the 'Sat R' makes no sign —Whatever number of books you may like to have pray accept as your own. Is not mine yours in all things ? I would prefer that you should not buy books of mine. That is for the good public to do

and as a river embayed, a deep quiet mirror to illimitable skies Shall I stir my mind about the Elect ? Let them walk in their Paradise ! So, though I think of you, it is as one under seal , fixed, stamped, monotonously certain of his fate This destroys all sequence of ideas in me I revert inevitably to the original proposition— ‘ He has aimed and hit the mark ’ All around him now is empty babble However, I will talk, for you may be beginning to sigh for a breath of England Ah me ! how I would wish to be with you, if wishing availed But I must work on, and it is just now imperative, or nothing would keep me from Venice and you at this season, or from Italy and you I know we should feel together on so much there , and then sunshine means ten times more with sweet companionship —I am working at Emilia Belloni Health is so-so—it has been pretty good What works I could throw off if I had the digestion of any of the creatures that hope to be saved ! I am fretted with so much in my head that my hands can’t accomplish The other day I walked with a good fellow whom you should know (his wife would make a charming companion for St Cecilia) to Mickleham, after dinner There we slept Next morning early we took our old route—over Dorking to Wotton . round Evelyn’s grounds on to Shere, then on the downs to St Martha’s thence to Guildford, Godalming, Milford, to the little Inn where you heard the nightingales and were ravished by them. After that my friend limped, so we had to return the day following, by train

I hope, by the way, your review won’t be written before you see the book. One poem, new to you (Ode to the Spirit of Earth in Autumn), will please you better than all—please you specially. It will suffice for me if you tell me what you think of it, and not the public The notices that have appeared fix favourably on the Road-

received by me with loud exclamation of delight Come on Saturday, I prithee But excuse my attendance on Friday I am obliged to be here, and indeed, notwithstanding your taunts Copsham is worth a visit just now The roses and the Romford aro aro in their finest condition —In haste, your faithful

ROBIN SELKIRK

Island of Juan Fernandez, Copsham

My homage to Demitrola as ever

Menu approved but to send it now when the feast is over! Am I embracing a phantom! Does my mouth water for a corpse! Does not the favourite poet of WE say 'Look not mournfully into the past ? You make me

To Captain Maxse

COPSHAM ESTATE, June 23 1862.

MY DEAR MAXSE—I write in haste, a short note, on the chance of speaking to you before you leave Turin Your article has appeared in the 'Post' It is very good but do you think it ? You should have whipped me on the score of the absurdities obscurities and what not I feel that you have been sparing me and though I don't love the rod, I don't cry mercy I'm exceedingly sorry that you did not review from the book Tho Odo to the Spirit of Earth will if I mistake not, catch hold of you I will see that notices of the Poems are forwarded to you But let me know your route and resting places —Tell me when you write whether your scenic faculty has been excited, and by what —I am at work on Emilia Belloni and bringing her more to your taste I have remodelled the whole—making the background more agreeable and richer comedy I have an immense quantity of work in store Prose, poetry a comedy (The Sentimentalists), etc Health is still weak and will

I wish particularly to be kept au courant of your change of abode: there's no knowing what I might do, on the spur. Whither in Switzerland do you go, first? I presume, across the Italian Lakes, and over the Splügen to Lucerne. Be careful of the waters of that lake: at some points it is dangerous at any moment.—Tell me, don't you find that great heat somewhat narrows and sharpens the reflective power? The effect, in Southern climates, on Art, is to sacrifice all to outline, as a rule, and murder detail. Even during the short time I was in Italy I experienced this in a small degree. If the passions did but slumber, Italy would be the very spot of earth for great work to be done. Here!—I should like to try it—I have a comedy germinating in the brain, of the Classic order. 'The Sentimentalists' I fancy it will turn out well 'Emilia Belloni' goes slowly forward, for the reason that I have re-written it. so, all will be new to you. I shall send you the Cornhill Mag. next month. Adam Bede has a new work in it. I understand they have given her an enormous sum (£8000, or more! she retaining ultimate copyright)—Bon Dieu! will aught like this ever happen to me?—Shall you stay long at Turin?—Of all the horrible cities! Two or three days at Milan will give you quite enough of the pet Italian city go to the Brera. and see Leonardo's wrecked Last Supper. On Como stop at Bellagio—not at the Villa d'Este the hotel is good at the latter place, but the scenery is not so fine . . .—Your constant loving

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To William Hardman

June 18, 1862

WELL-BELOVED TUCK!—(Though I know I am cut) 9th progressive station of Ginger Beer to eventful Pop, passed pleasantly Your kind recognition of it was

To William Hardman

July 12 1862

MY DEAR FIRST PERSON PLURAL,—I wish I could come to you The rolling seasons seem to have gone round thrice since I (I forgot whom I was addressing) shook your hands

I remember one Tuck a jovial soul a man after my own heart whom I loved I asked Nature for him she draws a South west veil across my eyes weeping Francatelli nods a cold and tasteless response! Tuck! No answer! I explore the woods of Copsham dale, fruitlessly

On Friday is the illustrious small man's birthday and he must not be left Edward Peacock and his boy are staying with me till Saturday Rossetti and Swinburne come on Saturday Will you come the week following?

Aha!—As if I cannot see that I am cut and that the gulf of a tail coat is for ever more twixt me and Tuck— Believe me still and ever my dear F P Plural your loving

GEORGE M

To William Hardman

RYDE PIER HOTEL August 16 1862

FREE LOVER TUCK!—To morrow we shall sail! We are off to the West Love!

And now for a Toast!
(To Tuck the Toast shall be)
I am off along the Coast
And would he were with me

(Popular London Air commonly chanted
by Tuck and Robin)

Here's Morison drunk with salt water, Mrs M ditto
G M ditto ditto We swear we'll live in it till we come

never be much, I fear, unless I can purchase two years' perfect rest and travel—B W—came the other day 'acknollogded' his foregone errors, and hoped for forgiveness 'Me deer Mardith,' etc!—He hope, to get some property now. I fear he is in a prospective mess His present one is without dispute. I helped him to the best of my ability, and he departed, praising me, magnifying me.—Fred Chapman, you know, is married He goes to Florence in September Tom Trollope (who lives there) tells me that September is a delicious month for Florence, the best in the year—What are your plans about the winter? Don't fail to let me know, because, if you are in Italy in early Spring next,—say, Feb -March to June, I will come over, as I desire to breathe that air with you—I have not yet been to the International a second time.

Are you writing anything beyond impressions or voyages?—What you told me once on that head (that I have influenced you against your own compositions, acting so as to check you) weighs upon me sadly, now and then I know you will be happier if you write, and I am convinced you will, if you choose, write a good book. Pray, don't put aside that old and excellent ambition of yours You will miss a friend

I begin to yearn to see you—just as I did when in Tyrol You will get a sentimental poem this time

You hear all about the Yankees and politics, of course

Read 'Les Misérables,' if you can get it Six vols are out It is conceived in pure black and white It is, nevertheless, the master work of fiction of this century—as yet There are things in it quite wonderful

I bow my head to your dear Lady, praying that her health may be improved, and am, your loving

GEORGE MEREDITH

My dear boy is quite well, flourishes wonderfully.



home pickled. I have got a Pea-jacket and such a nautical hat, and such a roll of the legs already

Now, Tuck,—Will you do this for me?—Will you write for this week's 'Ipswich Journal' a summary of the week's news and an article—on America, if you like Follow the Press Will you call and see Foakes?¹ And if you don't see him, will you, nevertheless, send your work on Thursday, or take it, to Mr. Gough, at 1 New Square, Lincoln's Inn, where you sometimes call and see your Robin on Thursdays, and if you, perchance, don't see Gough, will you post the aforesaid to H. Knights, Esq., 'Ipswich Journal' Office, Ipswich I shall write and post one article, but I shan't be up to the latest news

For I'll be in a cabin,
Just 3 feet long, 6 square.
Just ponder on your Robin,
The figure of him there.

I don't care a damn,
etc.

You will immensely oblige me by doing this, and I shall then be able to run over to the Channel Islands. If not, I must up to London from Weymouth. Please write then immediately (Post Office, Weymouth, if you write on Monday, ditto Torquay if on Tuesday) that I may hear from you on Tuesday morning Adieu. My (Neptune emboldens me!) love to Demitroïa—Your friend, penitent, loving, lastingly, GEORGE MEREDITH

By the way, why don't you come down to Copsham for a day or two, next week? If you can write for me, I shan't be back till Tuesday or Wednesday week. The cottage and all in it are yours There can you invite

¹ Proprietor of the *Ipswich Journal*



*George Meredith & his son Arthur
from a photograph*

R C to dine with you in place of my doing so And I wish you would ! There's wine in the cellar If you think well of this drop Miss Grange a word of warning I am surprisingly aux cieux already

A dreadful hutch in S Belloni has been distressing me of late This day tides me over the difficulty—to morrow I am moodily leaning over the bin (2 n s I think) aile, thinking of Tuck ! Au revoir Mind ! The Weymouth Post Office, Torquay on Wednesday

To William Hardman

August 1862.

MY DEAR HARDMAN,—Here is a precious liberty I am going to take ! S—— has come so I must stop in town and so must Sons Will you bed us (Sons and self) till Monday ? I fancy S—— will be delighted to come on Sunday He looks wild and rough, but who wouldn't after being horded with 397 men and 3 women One of the latter wears a fine moustache It struck me (I saw the whole boilin of em) that one of the 397 left it on her lips by accident or that the 397 contributed Might I bring S—— but No Oh Tuck ! Shall I tell it ?—It's a fact but in anguish I beg you to conceal it even from D—ia S—— came smack at my cheeks when we met It was done before them all Now I feel what Lucretia's emotions were or those of the little girl with the senso of colour so strong examined by Knov Your loving
GEORGE M

To William Hardman

GEORGE INN
GREAT MARLOW Sept 7 1862.

Dearest and if possible more Precious Tuck because absent ! And yet not so but more desired And thereby hangs a philosophy Johnson hath me in an iron grip



Copsham to say that Zillah¹ has Smallpox! Luckily the little man was at Hoddesdon I have written to Jessopp who will take him immediately Hard as it is to let him go he goes on Friday next Lo, I have been prompt on this occasion but conceive the horrible bore The house won't be habitable for 2 months, and friends won't come under 4 I have notions of shidaddling I go this day down to Tunbridge Wells and return on Wednesday following On Friday to Norwich Then to Oxford with Morison on Tuesday for a short period Then to Sussex Then—perhaps to Tuck, for 2 or 3 days if he has returned to the Refectory Health at Marlow excellent at Hoddesdon poor Result in London—Megrimus

I heard of poor Hinchliffe from Hamilton last night, who spoke croakily Please convey to Hinchliffe my word of sympathy and hope to see him recovered soon Also congratulations of the heartiest kind to that humble aspirant for women's honours the fair young Betsy! Amphitrite we might have been sure would do the business for her Now for Cupidon

Went to Hatfield and Panshanger Hertfordshire is a pretty county I would rather not dwell in it Yet with Tuck—and when I say with my We Tuck I do not mean to diminish him and make him small—the contrary yea I double him almost—with my We Tuck I could dwell in many places and exchange friendly nods with Providence

My love to Potter and Nellie To Demitroia all sweet things

PS—At Hoddesdon facing Johnson's house there is a butcher, his name is TUCK

¹ Niece of Miss Grange housekeeper at Copsham

² Ethel and Nellie daughters of Mr and Mrs Hardman

sauh I shan't go save as an ariow head from the bow
which himself twangeth. I say, that but for Black
Foakes' Day, common to no Calendar, save mine, Alas !
I would,

Willy nilly,
Be off with you a jolly dance,
To Falmouth, Torquay and Penzance
Or Scilly.

But Johnson¹ adds—‘ Will Hardman come down to me at Hoddesdon, on Monday week, and go to see Hatfield (famous old garden and house) and Panshanger, where are pictures of price—if so let him say so, as a man, and he is welcome ’ To this I add, from him and from me, Come down here for a day or two We are comfortable. The country is delicious The walks are heavenly. The river is a dream of green herbage and reflected heaven The weather promises May we expect you on Tuesday or Monday night, perchance—on a sudden a great feat ! You are free, and soon going to be melancholy, if without excitement Do come Johnson is very desirous to make acquaintance with the grasp of your hand I, when I am parted from it, pine, as you know !—Write ! But should the true Tuckian inspiration seize you, outstrip the post, as you alone can —In all love,
your faithful

ROBIN.

To William Hardman

FOAKES DEN, AFTER FOAKES DAY,
Sept 19, 1862

MY DEAR TUCK,—I rejoice to hear that the wandering atom ‘ I ’ is the happy and thrice-beloved ‘ We ’ once more Here ’s my news Thursday last a letter from

¹ Of Johnson, Matthey and Co, bullion brokers Nicknamed ‘ Bullion ’

the public schools May Norwich be spared! Yes I trust but parental humanity is anxious

I shall write to Mr Jessopp in a few days Pray, let me hear speedily —Your ever faithful

GEORGE MEREDITH

*To Frank Burnand*¹

TOVRIDGE WELLS

MY DEAR FRANK —Your letter has been forwarded to me here My housekeeper's niece at the Cottage has fever fortunately Sons were absent So we are all in exile and consequently, I pronounce the dread word and he is already breeched for school

I shall be in town on Friday, and will order 'that a copy of Modern Love be sent you The printers errors are innumerable

I am going to Norwich with Sons at the end of the week, to the King Edward's Grammar School the Head Master of which is a friend and very fond of the little man Write to me 'Care of Rev A Jessopp The School House Norwich whether you can take me for a night on my return If the young Mauritius² is at Hurstpierpoint and will have me for 2 or 3 days, I shall then go to him If you go too, all the better

That you have been wearing the mask of 'Fun for some period I have known

As often in a bun
The currants you surprise
Behind the mask of Fun
I catch my Franco's eyes

¹ Later Sir Francis Burnand on the staff of *Fun* He became a contributor to and later editor of *Punch*

² Maurice Fitzgerald

To Mrs Jessopp.

COPSHAM, ESHER

MY DEAR MRS. JESSOPP,—I thought I might have come on Friday, but on that day I have three masters, and this is not a figure of speech, but a fact in flesh I could not get out of harness till 3 P M, and the 4 express would have brought me to you too late I should have liked so much to see the boys and my boy among them He has grown strange to me in the long absence . . Now this is my proposition —You will see it is delivered under the perfect conviction that I am welcome, and even wanted —as thus · I will come to you this quarter for a week and bring home my little man at its close —Or —I will come to you the next quarter for 2-3 weeks, lighter of heart, less burdened on head I will then write nothing but poetry (not of hedges and ditches) and I will bloom my best

There!—You shall decide If I come now I shall certainly not be sad about it I am certain to be pleased I can make all arrangements with a week's warning, but I am under some pressure for this reason, among others, that my fastidiousness has made me turn from my new work to cut to pieces four printed chapters of Emilia (who begins to dissatisfy me totally, as do all my offspring that have put on type) If I come next quarter this gloom and uncertainty will have vanished

You will flatter me by deciding I state the case—act thou. You know I shall be happy under the roof that holds my dearest, and more, among my dearest friends so let your mandate be what it may, hesitate not —Have I fixed the onus upon you cleverly? I have simply put matters as they stand

What an unpleasant thing for Holden is that scurvy fever case! The disease has been going the round of all

In the evening Jessopp his wife a pretty niece and myself, do music read Molière, and are really happy I feel so much that I would gladly live near them if it were possible

I particularly wish you to know them Tuck! It would do thee good, for an I be not deceived, thou art but a lost sheep and one of the ungodly

The Dormitories of the boys are thoroughly ventilated cool as a twilight balcony Each boy is partitioned off from his neighbour, and the main punishment is for infringing this partition Jessopp has sent up from here six scholarships lately Well, Sons are wonderfully buoyant in a jiffy Mrs Jessopp writes to say that she took the boys to Lowestoft yesterday Sons were so independent that they assured her they were exactly like the other boys and didn't want looking after This is a fair prospect for my dear man

Mrs Jessopp is the friend of every resident in the house and the boys love her In wit and blood she is one of the brightest little women that you can meet Jessopp may well praise her fine qualities The Lord decreed to him a helpmate I say Tuck! Does praying get us wives of this sort? If so—But it is clear that it does not, for Tuck never goes on his marrow bones as I have been doing 24 times per diem of late Jessopp won't let me depart till Monday week I am very comfortable so why not?—Then I go to Sussex then to Richmond then to Morison then to Oxford then to Glaisher and Coxwell, then to Endymion's dear Love (I will drop you some green cheese regularly at 6 p m while there) After that Bedlam I suppose for I don't know of any other place for which I shall have been such an accomplished graduate What's coming to me? I feel the sensations of some peculiarly scampish Racket ball Love to—now don't get in a passion Tuck!

To William Hardman.

Oct. 4, 1862

Tuck, Sweet Charmer, tell me why
I 'm at ease when you are by ?
Have you had ' a round ' with Care,
Left him smoshen, stript him bare,
That he never more can try
Falls with me when you are by ?

Ah, but when from me you 're screened,
Atrobiliad glows the fiend
Fire is wet and water dry
Candles burn cocked hats awry
Hope her diamond portal shuts,
Grim dyspepsia haunts my—Ahem !

(Madrigal written in St. John's College, Cambridge,
Saturday, October 4, 1862)

Yes ! I am here Meeting of Brittish Ass —So, why not ?
And I 've wandered up and down Trinity thinking of
Tuck, the radiant, and of others, mooning by the Cam,
into which classic flood dropped numerous dead leaves
I have dined with Fellows and am to dine with them
again have been cordually received, and inhabit cham-
bers of an absent graduate, whose slave is my slave
Jessopp brought me We return to Norwich to-night
What a good fellow he is ! His wife takes high rank
in Demitroia's Corps She is quite charming : she
unites worth and sweetness of nature and capacity.
They have the same face for the school that they show
to the world I never conceived a place better managed
Jessopp has 25 boys in his house They have studies
where 2 study together and are never intruded upon
He breakfasts and dines with them We have a good
deal of Prayer. Oh, Tuck, have we not led thoughtless
lives and snuffed our own conceit ! Tuck !

the decrees Dear Sir! Should you see him and the faithful and loving spouse, be as good as to make known to him these my enquiries and that, should he be ill I recommend any cure but the Epicure moreover (which he will understand) that I trust among the chief things in his life that 'WE may never be split in 2 Finally that I am in Norwich till Tuesday next after that Chapman & Hall Piccadilly is my address If gout permit him to use a pen Gout alone can have kept him silent to his loving friend and admirer I would wish him to know that Sons are well and happy had a great fall at Gymnastics last evening being adventurous but are none the worse — Yours respectfully

GEORGE MEREDITH

To Captain Maxse

THE SCHOOL HOUSE NORWICH

MY DEAR MAXSE,— I can't leave here till Tuesday They provide all kinds of amusement for me By the way Arthur had a tremendous fall the night before last at gymnastics in the crypt of the School House While we were all engaged at a particular swing this small man mounts up a ladder to catch hold of a pole—misses it and comes down about sixteen feet not on his head or arms thanl the Lord! I felt a slight tug at my hand and the little fellow related his disaster, shaken and sick but pluck as stout as ever No harm done and some experience gained I will give you an account of the school when we meet Yesterday I visited a model Englishman primarily a gentleman and scholar a Reverend also, with full tolerance and zeal for his duties a farmer a gardener and exhibitor of fruits and flowers, and winner of prizes an innovator in all things as a man who in all things thinks for himself He is besides a profound geologist and correspondent of Lyell

Human nature will out, sometimes—Potter, and Nellie, and Potter's mother, and Nellie's mother, and Tuck's wife So, there, you see . your jealousy brings it on you three times instead of once. Adieu !—Your loving

GEORGE M.

To William Hardman

SCHOOL HOUSE,
NORWICH, Oct 4, 1862.

DEAR SIR,—I take the liberty to write to you, requesting a line of information, concerning one, Tuck, a ruddy man and a lusty, with whom I suppose you to be acquainted, and about whom I have recently been feeling a considerable anxiety. He has relations at Hoddesdon, Tunbridge Wells, and Norwich , but they have no recent knowledge of his proceedings I have written to him, and can get no reply. You will acknowledge that I have cause for anxiety when I tell you that in a work I have lately been reading, it is said, with regard to fleshpots, that he who giveth his heart to them is on the highroad to perdition Which was truly and sadly the case with this named Tuck A dangerous man, Sir ! for he tempteth us to love this life, and esteems it a cherishable thing yet, withal, one whom to know once is to desire ever. For indeed such a one is seldom seen. Pity that such roseate healthful bloom as that he wore upon the cheeks of him should be a banner of Repletion ! Alas ! and that the sunny perfection delighting us in him signified verily, that Nature, though proud of this, struggled greatly. Even so, the notable rotundity, the fine protuberance, was excess of Potatoe ! Yea, and also the very perfectness of him partook too largely of Francatelli. Hence my fear for the man in that he, who was good himself as an egg fresh-laid, had a love of things good, and did attract them to him profusely . which is against one of

Yesterday I went to visit a splendid fellow, one of the most capable men of his time Whereof when we meet I stay with Morison in town Shall I dine with you on Wednesday ? He is alone, if you could ask him too I wrote to Mr Hardman for tidings of you but anticipate no reply—stuck up Cambridge Swell ! Tuck for me ! My love to everybody

GEORGE M

To William Hardman

Nov 6 1862

TUCK CARISSIMO !—The news being this Jeff hasn't got R Houdin If it is to be had at Nutts or Dulau's it will be immediately forwarded to you Lucas we visited apropos of that fellow Hardman's article It is to be inserted soon I told Lucas Hardman was not a fellow to be trifled with said he was a Gastronome !

Oh Lord ! says Lucas 'we mustn't offend him I remarked that Hardman had invented New Dishes

God bless my soul says Lucas I should like to know him 'But said I the Culinary comments of Tuck delivered under globular light are not these meat wine and wisdom and eclipse Hardman as a Christmas flank of beef lords it over the leaner seasons of the year ?

By Jingo says Lucas 'it is a privilege to know him ! Steadily facing my Editor I said And Tuck is my pupil He rung my hand speechless 'All I exact said I is that you publish Tar and Feathers instanter or you experience the operation He made sign that it should be done within a month

To William Hardman

CORSHAM ESHER Nov 12 1862

TUCK GREAT HEART !—I will come to you to morrow and dine and hear music and sleep if you can take me Dinner with O a W postponed Still we carpenter It

a paleontologist, the friend of Owen — one of the Alpine climbers — in short, the most capable human creature that I have ever met. Be sure I studied him. He did me the favour to invite me to stay with him, which to my regret I can't do now. — Your faithful and loving

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To William Hardman.

Oct. 11, 1862.

Embrace me once more, Oh Tuck! Thou liv'st! This is to chronicle the sudden and unexpected descent of the small man from a height of 17 feet to the ground. Poor Sons little intended the feat and therefore performed it satisfactorily. In the Crypt here, there is a Gymnasium, fitted up under a regular professor, who is fifth master. One Reimicke. He did this and that, he went in and out of this and the other, and his pupils did the like. Apparently Sons had then emulation violently excited, for whilst we were all engaged with other wonders, Sons must mount a ladder by himself, and from the top of it make a catch at a pole from whence to slip down naturally, instead of which he came plump on to the floor. I felt him tugging gently at my hand, and could not make out what was the matter with him. He had come to tell me that he felt queer, and what he had 'gone and done.' I took him up and his nerves gave way just a moment (not noisily). Then we rubbed him a bit and discovered him to be sound. He was jolly and ready for fresh adventures in $\frac{1}{2}$ of an hour, wiser Sons, as we trust. My parental heart beat fast under its mask. Jessopp and his wife (who is one of the wives of the generation) do all that is possible to make me happy in my own way. They do not want me to go. They do not poetise me but honour me by treating me as simple flesh, so that one does not feel mounted on a pole and ultimately destined to come down as Sons did.

To William Hardman

Dec. 13 1862.

From Gentz's Diary Tage Bücher von Friedrich von Gentz Ed Varnhagen v Ense J'ai lu le soir les feuilles infernales de Cobbett'

1 du mois d'avril (he reads it on Friday, 21st July 1809—shortly upon Wagram, I think, or Lobau on the Danube 'La crainte que je nourrissais depuis quelque temps de quelque grave catastrophe menaçant l'intérieur de l'Angleterre a été prodigieusement augmentée par cette lecture, dont l'effet sur moi—je ne puis le dissimuler—a été presque aussi grand que celui des plus épouvantables nouvelles qui rétentaient dans mon voisinage direct)

Gentz was, by birth, a Prussian in the Austrian diplomatic service of high ability much trusted conversant with English politics and English politicians the friend of Metternich and others He writes this certainly under excitement but it is useful as showing the dread Cobbett could inspire abroad the view taken on the continent of his writings and their presumed results

Gentz evidently confounds him as utter Radical Perhaps you might look out in Cobbett's Register of this date and see what is to be gathered At any rate what I have written out might make a good foot note illustration¹

To Tuck from Robin

Sons come on Wednesday!—Dimitrova will translate the French

For you I am sure if you ask her humbly
In concord and with reverence Adieu my lusty Friar
Adieu adieu my Friar he cried
O much I trust that they have lied who tell these things
of you

¹ William Hardman was then at work upon a life of Cobbett which was however put aside when he learned that John Morley was at work upon the same subject

is great exercise. I have half cut my great toe off already. Axe went slap through my big plodding boots and set me dancing over the meadow as if Demitroïa had struck up the Tarantella.

To William Hardman.

Dec. 10, 1862

To-day, you know, I dine with Morison
Is there a dinner with Tuck on the horizon ?

Tuck, my treasure ! Tuck, my pleasure !
Lucas won't have a meeting at the 'Cheshire
Cheese' till after Christmas—truly,
He's a bore and I'm yours duly,

ROBIN

PS.—And if you love me, write and say so.

'Quæque cupid, sperat,' sings Ovidius Naso

To William Hardman

Dec. 13, 1862.

DEAR TUCK,—In reply to your Mandate this day received Sons come up on Wednesday and sleep in town that night but how can I possibly keep him from Copsham on Thursday ? I fear me I must take him down It was his special request six weeks ago

And tho' my Friar's mandate is severe,
The wishes of the sons of sons are dear
I really fear

I must bring home my little man on Thursday
(As you would rhyme) that he may in the furze play

Acknowledge that a Friar cannot always be obliged
I shall regret not to see the King and Queen of B.

Thine,

ROB.

I presume that if I send to Bankers at Norwich according to directions before the next session, it will do

I am amused from morning to night by Arthur's account of the boys. It is as I suspected he knows their characters consummately. I had the same faculty when I was young. But whether he gets it from deduction or nervous feelers or the conjunction of both I can't guess. He hopes to get a prize next year speaks of his success in dictation not boastingly, but to assure him whom he suspects to be a sceptical Papa, that he is not lazy and not stupid. He is not absolutely either of the two. He is pre-eminently a growing boy and has some characteristics to outgrow. He will never I fancy, do credit to you by any display of acquired knowledge but after a period I think you will find that his understanding is as sound as that of any fellow you have had to do with.

He says 'Jerrard, minor is the gentlemanly boy of the School'

'Not Angove I asked

Yes Angove too but he's not so courteous as Jerrard minor. Jerrard minor always thinks of others first. I like him.

The one point he evidently a little chafes at (though not complainingly and with submission poor martyr!) is the Sunday religious exercise which you have dared to temper for the poor lambs and which they must still think severe. I remember at that age, how all love of the Apostles was belaboured out of me by three Sunday services of prodigious length and drowsiness. 'Corinthians will forever be associated in my mind with rows of wax candles and a holy drone overhead, combined with the sensation that those who did not choose the road to Heaven enjoyed by far the pleasantest way. I cannot hear of Genesis, or of the sins of amorous David,

To Arthur G. Meredith

Dec 15, 1862.

MY DARLING LITTLE MAN!—I shall be at Shoreditch station, on Wednesday, to meet the Train at 6 30. But, you must not be disappointed, if I tell you that it will be too late for you to go on to Esher that night; and you will sleep at Mrs. Morison's, in Porchester Square. Mr. Hardman wants me to dine with him on Thursday, but I have told him I am afraid you won't let me. Copsham will be delighted to see you. All the dear old woods are in their best winter dress. Mossy Gordon has come from Eton. Janet leaves England next week, but hopes to see her dear boy before she goes—Be careful not to have any larks in the train. Only fools do that. As much fun as you like, but no folly. Look out for Ely Cathedral, just before you get to Ely station. At Cambridge you will see the four towers of 'King's' Chapel, built by Cardinal Wolsey. Tell Angove, that I will get a bed for him, if he wishes to sleep in Town on Wednesday night. And give Angove your address, written down; that he may let me know when he will come to London from Cornwall, and we will go to the theatre together, and then he will take you to school again—Your loving Papa,

GEORGE MEREDITH

To the Rev. Augustus Jessopp

ESHER, Dec 23, 1862.

MY DEAR JESSOPP,—I found my little man looking marvellously brisk and clear of eye. All his friends exclaim that his school agrees with him. I am altogether pleased and satisfied, and (quoique pauvre diable, comme vous savez) should ungrudgingly pay double the annual sum, to have him with you and your wife, which I consider a privilege not to be measured by money.

better things for our grandchildren. Or, are we simply degenerate stomachs? and ought we to eat the fearful dainty (the British Cook's one Great Conception) with gratulation?—Adieu!—Your faithful

GEORGE MEREDITH

To William Hardman

ESTHER, Dec. 23 1862.

MY CHRISTMAS TUCK!—I am preparing for the pudding with tremendous exercise. I had made up my mind to go with you to Boxing Night festivity, with Sons like wise. But he will not like the Strand. He is ardent for a jolly Clown a Pantaloona of the most aged the most hopeless a twirling Columbine a Harlequin with a wand on everybody's bottom. This does the small man seriously incline to. Can I say Nay? And he finds he detests Plays and Burlesques. I remember his last visit to the Strand. He is too young for puns so, if you have taken tickets sad shall I be but I am for Drury Lane, or Covent Garden for uproar, a pit reeking with oranges gods that flourish pewter pots and tricks that stick and show their mortality at starting. Would would would that Tuck were then at my side! I declare that I have swung my beetle¹ and roared at anticipated head long fun with Tuck. I would go to both but, you see I have again promised the Son. I must go the following night and there is the further loss of time, if I disappoint him. I understood you distinctly a Pantomime bully Tuck! Do we quarrel? If so, I send Love to Some body and snap my fingers at you. If not my regards of the warmest to both—Your affectionate

GEORGE MEREDITH

¹ The beetle—an iron weight at the end of a wooden shaft this was thrown into the air and caught again by the shaft. There is little doubt that it was this exercise which largely contributed to his spinal weakness in later years.

or of Hezekiah, without fidgetting in my chair, as if it had turned to the utterly unsympathetic Church-wood of yore. In despair, I used to begin a fresh chapter of the adventures of St. George (a serial story, continued from Sunday to Sunday), and carry it on till the preacher's voice fell. Sometimes he deceived me (I hope, not voluntarily) and his voice bade St. George go back into his box, and then ascended in renewed vigour once more, leaving me vacant of my comforting hero, who was not to be revived, after such treatment. I have known subsequent hours of ennui but nothing to be compared with those early ones. Your evening service is a noble relief, your evening discourse most sensible, healthy and calculated to catch the wandering, youthful mind. But, it is the third dose of the day. Is it, therefore, appreciated? I know you can't change the system, even tho' you should view the case as I view it. I am merely prattling. I think the drill an admirable idea for an assemblage of anchorites. The future monk will be most grateful for it. I fear the future man will revenge himself.

I think my friend's yacht starts on the 7th January. It will be away about six days. I shall be back at Esher in time. But at that period keep me informed of your place of abode. I would not miss you for any number of yacht excursions. On this occasion (snow promising, or stiff gales) I go to please my friend, more than myself.

All that a thankful Papa can say, to the Lady of three Pussies black!—Alack!—was not the omen a death?

The best thing I can wish you at this season is, Strength to conquer the Christmas pudding! I would that I dined at home! I would eat by the dictates of common sense and a discreet appetite. As it is I plunge with knowledge aforeshortened into a week's dyspepsia. I shall be ridden, all night by a plum-pudding-headed hag. shall taste the horrors without the vacuity of Death! We will hope

Five jolly yachtsmen ! Yachtsmen five !
 And have you seen five jolly yachtsmen ?
 If they're not dead why they're alive
 They're sprawling mid the pipes and potsmen !

The ghostly yacht which now you 'll see
 Go sailing up the British Channel
 A Poet and a Friar theron 'll be
 On board the latter frock'd in flannel

Like Lucifer's with lobsters dash'd
 The hue upon their cheeks and noses
 The Friar cries loud Our fate we 've hash'd
 Why sail'd we not in the time of roses ?

'There was a place called Gordon Street,
 A planet known as Francatelli'

(Here the Friar ventures on familiar and non admissible rhymes He is dismissed to seek companionship with the Flying Dutchman)

Tuck of the Earth ! I cannot come to you to morrow as I have to go to Chelsea I think St Bernard will ask me to him for Thursday I doubt if we meet this week If you have aught pressing to communicate address—
 16 Cheyne Walk Chelsea S W Adieu—Your loving
 GEORGE M

A letter from Tasmania has reached me 'Saved from wreck of Colombo

To the Rev Augustus Jessopp

ESHER SURREY Jan 7 1863

MY DEAR JESSOPP—Will you come on Friday evening, at 6 P M next week ? I hope you will stay the day

To William Hardman

ESHER, ISLAND OF COPSHAM,
Jan 6, 1863

TUCK, ahoy ! Messmate ! This is the weather for yachting. Yo—ho—ho !

The 'Irene' tugs and runs amuck
At all she meets on Ocean bobbin'
Hard to the taffrail clutches Tuck
There 's little of the Cock in 'Robin' !

Below, discussing pipes and beer,
And all that may and all that mayn't be,
St Bernard says that he feels queer,
And queerer still feels Mrs St. B.

James Parthenon of tempest tells
5 jolly yachtsmen once were lost in ,
Pales the red cheek of Tuck, as swells
With ocean's roll the gorge of Austin

'Now, do you think, you Argue-nots,'
St Bernard asks, 'seasick was Jason ? '
The Jolly yachtsmen eye their cots,
Austin cries 'Ho !'—and Tuck 'A basin !'

St Bernard hurries on the deck
Not long his chattering teeth have kept tunc
To waves that threat the 'Irene's' wreck,
When one bears off his pipe to Neptune !

Then Tuck, half doubting he 's afloat,
Rolls up, with eyes all greeny-sheeny
Clutches St Bernard at the throat
'Tell me ! Did Cubitt¹ build the "Irene" ? ?'

¹ Cubitt, builder of Gordon Street and a wide area in the Bloomsbury district, in which Hardman's home was situated. Cubitt was one of the best builders in London, or, indeed, in England, and his houses are noted for their excellent construction.

these worshippers of the pillar — Cujus ad effigiem,
tantum non meiere fas est' — Your faithful

GEORGE MEREDITH

To Captain Marsc

GARRICK CLUB

MY DEAR FRED — Rhoda now rushes to an end
I don't at all know what to think of the work I am
confused by this frost It nips and impoverishes me

By the way — What of the dog ? If you haven't heard
of him it is by no means improbable that he has left the
neighbourhood the County the south west in fact and
trotted back to Yorkshire The Colley is famous for
his 'sagacity as the Natural History books say in this
respect and will find his way back to a point in Scotland
out of England

Please write You haven't my excuse I see you in
that dear little room warm with one eye on a winter
prospect, snow and black river between the banks —
Tell me how the frost takes you, kindly or not —
Gilmore à propos of acting and art is powerful He is
a thorough 'Gallery critic — hates adores, flings his
orange peel and empties his brandy flask and is quite
satisfied with himself at the conclusion

Miss Bateman is said to have failed as Julia I can
see that to be possible though I bow to her Leah Let
me have a letter speedily — Yours lovingly

GEORGE MEREDITH

To William Hardman

Jan 28 1863

DEAR AT ANY PRICE TUCK ! — I come Dinner you
give me at half past five I presume ? A note to Foal es
den, if earlier Let us have 5 ms for a pipe before
we go You know we are always better tempered when

following at least I am too modest to press the cottage strongly upon you, and bid you do as it seemeth best to you

In the matter of Anchorites Do you really believe them to have been men of thews and breadth of brow ? Yes, if they have slaughtered their dozens and begin to think Heaven a pleasant resting-place. As a rule, No Endurance is not a test of the fact The physically robust man would have wasted and succumbed. The bilious and nervous man will last longer than the sanguine Physiology will tell you much. Then again, can I morally admire, or reverence, or see positive virtue in, St Simeon ? Was he a hero, of his kind ? Does the contemplation of him bring us nearer to God ? To what a God ! I turn aching in all my flesh to adore the Pagan, in preference He smites kind nature in the face, to please his God !—St Sim. may be a very strong man Granting it, I shall think more of Milo He tears up the groaning oak, which I hold better than to pluck with fanatic fingers at the roots of humanity —Don't you see that it is not adoration moves the stinking Saint, but, basest of prostrations, Terror Terror, mighty to knit a man for endurance when allied to a cringing greed for a fair celestial seat —The truth is, you sniff the sublime in this creature Your secret passion is for sublimity Beauty you love , but, by the way, under protest , and with the sense of being a sinner Clerical training is to blame But, change the system Beauty is to be sought—let sublimity come Both are rare : but the former is our portion—belongs to us To deface it, is not sublme—villainous, rather ! To outrage reason as well as beauty, shows the organisation of a ruffian Be not misled by this dirty piece of picturesque Religiosity, animated . my gorge rises ! I hold my nostrils I cry for a Southwest wind to arise Plunge them into the pit, O Lord !

No he wouldn't leave his wife
 And he shouldn't leave his wife
 He didn't go to Copsham
 Cause he couldn't leave his wife

ROBIN LAURELFAIR

To Captain Maxse

ESTHER

MY DEAR MAXSE—The principle of health is thus to make good blood plentifully and to distribute it properly. Exercise of the right sort acting on seasonable diet, keeps the machine clear. Sweating saves us from impurities, at all events. The form of exercise must depend upon observation of our peculiar economy. As a rule walking much is only good for people in health. Any other exercise you can stop the moment you've had enough but you can't exactly time your distances and the instantaneous effect of fatigue, where there's one weak function, is to fall upon it bodily. A weak stomach is thus awfully oppressed by long walks.

My best solitary exercise is throwing the beetle—a huge mallet weighing 18 or 19 pounds—and catching the handle performing wondrous tricks therewith. The best in the world is fencing which braces the nerves, tightens muscles, occupies brain better than anything going contains fit measure of excitement and is thorough exercise. Boxing is a little brutal, though good. Fencing brightens the eye without blackening it. Avoid beer which is gaseous exceedingly. You see very old ale is too strong for the head, if drunk as ale and the young unseasoned beer we drink has to be digested with difficulty. Avoid new wines. A bottle of oldish claret might serve you four days. See that it's good and sound. That makes blood without heating. Your evenings—but what are an Englishman's evenings? Hotbeds of

this is the case. I come in full dress. And do the honour to the Duke's motto. I saw my little man off on Monday, after expedition over Bank and Tower. Thence to Pym's, Poultry oysters consumed by dozings Thence to Puicell's great devastation of pastry Thence to Shoreditch, where Sons calmly said 'Never mind, Papa ; it is no use minding it. I shall soon be back to you,' and so administered comfort to his forlorn Dad.— My salute to the Conquered One, and I am, your loving, hard-druv, much be-bullied

ROBIN

To William Hardman

COPSHAM, Feb 1, 1863

DEAR TUCK !—Come, if you can tear yourself away, on Wednesday Dinner at 6½. Orridge and wife, Wyncdowe Robin, most anxious We are likely to have a good fine blowing afternoon for the heath and the woods I say no more Only

Write me no pretty note
Puling excuses
Scorned by the Muses,
Who 's tied to a petticoat !

. A new receipt —I try it on Orridge to-night ' Lark Pood'n ' ' A bottom of stout juicy steak, topped by 2 doz $\frac{1}{2}$ bearded oysters, topped by 1 doz. larks ' General sentiment by anticipation—' Gallopschtious ! ' I have an idea that 2 kidneys might be introduced I have hitherto refrained from touching a lark not wishing that divine bird to send reproaches to me from heaven and fill the foundation of my digestion with remorse Do I degenerate ? Is it recklessness ? Or the noble prosecution of science, the wish to know all ?—Adieu ! It is friendship that says ' Come ! ' What reply ?

so heavenly We all cling to the days that were and won't be sons of Time To be the sticks and stones of a glorified past day we think better—Better be men I say!

Alas! those visits of the meek and guileless clergy! Thou errant one, that art invited to archery Meetings!—tis to the pew thou art being lured, or dragged perforce—Love to boy My kindest regards to your beloved, and know me ever, your loving

GEORGE M

To William Hardman

PICCADILLY March 20 1863

TUCK, GREAT ARCHER!—Thrice thy shaft has hit me!—On Thursday night we meet at Robert Cook's On Wednesday I shall dine with theo? I am overwhelmed with disgust at Emilia' Am hurrying her on like Yo Deuce She will do But, ahem!—she must pay I have taken some trouble with her and really shall begin to think her character weak in this respect if she don't hand in what I think due speedily I'm afraid considering hopes of cash house to build linen to buy, that

Once a Week will hold me from St B and the Blue Medi T Longing to see you and with L to a person who will pardon the impudence, and is not of the great host who care only to see 2 strokes put through the middle of that eloquent letter—Your devoted

GEORGE M

To William Hardman

CORSHAM April 8 1863

Your medicines and directions came opportunely¹ deciding me not to send for Izod Sons are as a mulberry in the shade they are spotted like a Pard, they are

¹ Arthur had caught measles Hardman was an enthusiastic homœopath in which belief Meredith shared

dyspepsia, as a rule There should be liveliness, music, billiards, dancing, dialogue, laughter—choice of all these. Instead of which—I ask you !

Don't drive your mind a step.

I hope I shall come to you soon, and then we 'll see better what your condition is We must hear the nightingales together. Last night I had them all round me on the heath. The woods were one orchestral semicircle What priceless weather, O my friend ! And how of your Ladye ? Ah, happy you ! At this season what a beggar am I, that hold out my hand and touch space at my fingers' ends ! Back comes the blood to my heart, which says, ' Well ! let 's strike on like a hammer, then ! ' Ding-dong, is my tune

I saw Borthwick the other day, and see that your brother has got Heligoland, where his wife will help to make him popular Altogether a good appointment, my Lord ! Here the Princesse Françoise marries the Duc de Chartres First cousins ! But necessity of state overbears the duties of flesh They must marry something Royal, and what if their children howl, or hang limp, so long as the blood is kept pure ?—The philosopher laughs sadly at these things He inclines to say ' Down with Institutions ! ' They do much for us—do they not undo more ? The truth is that everything that is would be right (according to the optimist, who sees half the truth) would be right, I say, if we were just wise enough to pluck the flower and not tie ourselves to the roots So the age of an Institution (quiconque) becomes the slavery of its supporters To know when a thing hath perished, or is vital, is one of the tests of wisdom Figure to yourself a lover who hears a voice in his ghastly bosom, demanding answer to the question, ' Was it all delusion ? ' And thus he bases his logic—' Impossible , it could not be delusion, for the dream was so immense, the rapture

As to your book those publishers will not do I should certainly put my finger on Macmillan If not then Longman who is a gentleman as well as man of business

I had the pleasure of exchanging salutes with Mr Jessopp of Cheshunt on Friday morning as I was returning from Hoddesdon

If you will take me in for a few days at the end of May or beginning of June I will gladly come and see some cricket among other things —Your very faithful

GEORGE MEREDITH

To Captain Maxse

ESHER May 1863

MY DEAR MAXSE,—I believe fully that the globules are efficacious I have seen them produce the effects specifically intended

Vegetable diet is generator of gases in a weak stomach Moreover the pasturing on grass does not make a soul milder My experience is this that no healthy person ever takes to vegetable diet excluding meat but that some people may make themselves more clean and sound if they do so for the reason that weak blood is apt to be irritated by the juices of flesh which are too strong for it All that I have ever known take to vegetable diet were scrofulous in the second or third degree not robust and pure The best thing, now and then, is a chop and bread for dinner If the stomach is quite down eschew potatoes as well as beer In exercise see mainly that you open the chest Don't sit long at a time Read out for a space Rise quickly in the morning Exercise after bath and pray do not be more than half an hour without feeding if you only take a crust of bread and water Your Moulsey habit of long morning fasts I remember To bed early but if you feel heavy take dumb bell exercise This must bring

hot as boiled cod in a napkin, they care for nothing but barley water, which I find myself administering at all hours of the night, and think it tolerable bliss, and just worth living for, to suck an orange. I am sorry to say they have a rather troublesome cough, otherwise all goes well.—Your loving

GEORGE M.

To the Rev. Augustus Jessopp.

ESHR, Sept 1863

MY DEAR JESSOPP,—There is a 10.57 train from London to your City—which snatches small boys from the hearts of their parents. On Tuesday next, my little recovered rosy man will journey down, alone, by that train, chewing the cud of anticipating fancy (I hope) The Guard will be bribed to keep eye on him. Will you send some person to meet him? He will be somewhat at sea, with his swoln bag, in the press of an arrival

Thank Mrs. Jessopp, from me, for her last letter

She will know, that, whatever inconsiderate relatives might do, my care for the sanitary condition of K Ed 6th's Grammar School is too great to permit me to allow a convalescent to return without performance of proper quarantine. I expect great praise from her And indeed, my heart is heavy at parting. I let him go from me now under a high sense of duty What strange dispensation is it which gives you my boy for the best portion of his young years?

I am in alarm about his boating on your river before he can swim

Is there always some responsible, careful fellow in the boats with the youngsters? Pray, tell me.

And also, write to me, I beg, to let me know that he comes safe to you Address, Chapman & Hall, for Wednesday morning

of mine. Then in the evening talk s C— of ME of the effect of my work on him and to the effect that in the circles he best knew, your Robin had made impression deep That that and that!—He s a nice fellow with good sense handsome

To William Hardman

July 4 1863

Dropping out of Chapman and Hall s the other day I fell on the placid face of Poco,¹ who without a ruffle of his surface received me that would have sent a hundred million ripples crossing rosily over Tuck. The Señor Poco spoke of a bad man—poor vulgarian, that he is! and without reverence or holiness. Not yet of the Elect yet is this foreigner hopeful and one, let us hope as we may of a right promising future. He hath desire in him for companionship among the Pantags humble desire and he taketh his occasional most healthful snubbing. He is going to send you the Court Journal

By the way C— told me that when Prins was at Curragh he came to the Vice Regal Lodge and played cricket. C— warned all the opposition bowlers that Royal patronage of the manly game depended on Prins getting at least one run. Having missed whilst fielding two fine smack into the hand catches Wales goes in and faces an unnamed steady determined Briton of a bowler round ruddy—an inevitable creature one clearly selected by the Gods to do this black business with the utmost satisfaction and comfort. Down went the wicket of your Prins at the first delivery of ball! To make matters worse some wretches (not I nowing that the wicket was a royal one or not feeling that the knocking of it over was rank treason to the Throne and to cricket)

¹ Lionel Robinson

you round. Continue pepsine, with now and then a halt
 Take no 'iron' A wineglass of quinine half an hour
 before dinner for three or four days running might do
 good. . . .—Your faithful

GEORGE M.

To William Hardman.

June 30, 1863

The Record
 Of Robin's sad Effort to
 Fool
 For the Beguilement of his Sov Lord
 Tuck

'A lady, the other day, having cut half her acquaintance,
 cut her own finger!' Nay, my Lord, spare the lash!
 I will get better. Robin, on being told that he was
 imitating the jesting of Burnand, replied ' Didn't I tell
 you I was robbin' Burnand!' Ha! Ha!—What!
 Still frowns my Lord?

On receiving your commands, I thought first of hunting up the King and Queen¹ for matter new and strange but calls upon me kept me from them I dined yesterday with one C—, Lord Carlisle's Secretary, who met Swinburne at Milnes's, and got him to bring about a meeting, after which, to astonishment of Poet, said P. was dropped We dined at St James's Club, after passing the afternoon at Lord's Cricket Ground, where we saw Gentlemen against Players First-rate match, and I had a fine set of characters about me old country squires, knights and lords, old cricketing hands hot for the honour of the game Notably a Colonel M— amused me, and shall see himself if he looks one day in a book

¹ Mr and Mrs Stephen Hamilton

To William Hardman

SEAFORD HADES July 10 1863

DEAR TUCK —(A letter to the above address will find me) Oh!—But rage and anguish stifle me! I tell thee Tuck—Why should I tell thee who carest not? Here am I—as an animal Our life is monstrous

My breakfast would supply a Workhouse my luncheons are equal to the refections of four fat Friars my dinner would satiate the soul of a ticket-of leave man I go to bed when Apollo lays his red nose over the Eastern hill and light-foot hours carry it on their shoulders in triumph to 27 Gordon Street what time Tuck with a final snore says 'Blow it!' and consents to rise Here is Frank Burnand that reeks puns from every pore Maurice and Gerald Fitzgerald Signor Vignati, Hynd man (Cambridge) Lawrence painter and others coming I suppose I shall stop through next week I don't think it possible for me to start with you Of course I shall follow you—don't fear! You have a little wounded and shot an arrow at your Robin, for why couldn't you wait for him? Or consult with him about going? Still I do give you my word that there is great probability of my running over to join you during your last two weeks Write and say before you go what you fancy will be your arrangements And O Tuck write from among the mountains that will look on you and tell me of the hearts to whom your COMPANION shall have imparted swift emotion and a habit of breathing Of Demitroia tell me Of her health and spirits Tell me of yourself fully Say where you are to be found in or about Thun and instruct me of the means of getting to you I had passionately desired to see great wonders of creation with my Tuck so that in days to

applauded lustily. Your Prins marched out with his bat amid the thunders.

At the first ball his wicket fell, and sins
No more has batted your illustrious Prins.

There, Tuck ! Now don't say I am not out harvesting for your delight. And I 'll get more stories for you, don't fear !

To William Hardman.

July 1863

DEAREST CUPID—TUCK !—I thought it all along ! I said 'This—my Friar whom I love—must be the Rosey Boy, well plumped on British fare ' And now that the G. M. (Oh !—dost thou mark the similarity of initials most wondrous ! Yea, is it not full of meaning !) acknowledges that she came up the Mersey in a cockle-shell, Tuck cannot deny that he is Cupidon And 'tis he who has twanged his bow and done Robin this dreadful damage—Alack ! No more of this But seriously, you, leaning over the side of a fat Olympian cloud floating over Copsham I see you turn to Demitroia-Psyche 'Poor Robin,' you say 'Let 's have him here,' says she 'He 'll never get to heaven,' says you, 'till a woman brings him ' 'True,' sighs D-P

(Damn that Tuck—he kisses her, pretends she wants to be consoled !—Has Olympus no shades ?)

Write to me care of Maurice Fitz-Gerald, Esq., Seaford, Sussex I shall be there perchance a week, and yet a day more, unless they gamble awfully. . . .

Why don't you tell me how your sisters are ? They 're married, you know. You 're right to protect your mother, but your sisters have husbands. Good-bye I hope to be able to spin livelier rubbish when I have taken rest, and seen new men, fresh faces, other minds.'

GEORGE M.

him a ring of which he said Catch hold and the man sought to catch hold but ever the ring swayed and its swaying was the promise of bliss and the baffling of desire So the man thought If I jump I catch it And lo he jumped And at the first jump touched the ring which flew from him At the second jump likewise and in addition his falling was upon his nose Even so he went at the 3rd and 4th essay and on Then thought he This ring is cast so far from me because that an Angel dropped it so near! Alas! What sadder thing is there to the full heart of great wishes than the word Almost If the man dear Critic of weakness had seen the said ring distant he had remarked—The birds of the air may catch it but it hung within mortal grasp—almost! He could just touch it The effort to seize sent it heavenward—him to earth Yet O Heaven! as Ocean collects her billows for one great plunge I know not but that I will try I see that you are making a circuit and that the Wild Man of Gordon Street is for pranks so to be with you one must start with you If you see me on Tuesday it will be that I have come to town to make immediate arrangements for joining you for the reason partly that the Wild Man is not in my opinion a fitting protector of—of you of course he is (after a fashion) of I was going to say—and it is no use his frowning at Table d Hote for they will openly admire a lovely woman on the Continent where let me add Beauty if not jealously watched and guarded and the fresh English wild rose without a disengaged hand and forecasting mind to pave its way may be in danger of a moment's sensitive disquiet—at the contemplation of which possibility the hearts within us do painfully pant and heave But let us talk seriously Is your COMPANION quite well? May I beg you to present her with my kind regards Prompted by the fatherly feeling (which must exist

come, when Robin is as a rushlight, and Tuck one of Price's Patent Composite Tallow-vats, we two may say—
‘ This we saw, and that we saw, green Alpine lakes where the brides of the angels bathe , snows pure as the forehead of YOUR COMPANION , peaks, passes, and all the other P 's ’ —only, my Tuck, the sublime and beautiful should for ever stand as witnesses of a marriage of our true affection, the same being registered in verse immortal by reason of the subject

In Thun, you will see Jessopp . haply, may you hear him out of tune (notes of Burnand) But, if you hear him—Think of a Cockchafer informing the world that his wife has run away from him —so deep, so desolate the voice of Jessopp Take to thy mind Nature's bassest note conceive a voice millions of fathoms below the crust of earth . the incarnation of three Minor Canons primed for their holy labours on port a Cathedral voice a voice that you shake to and curiously look to see whether one works his coat-tails as bellows to inflate and give inspiration to such a voice —even such the voice of Jessopp He desires very much to see and know you Do your best to meet him I know that Demitroïa has exchanged words with his wife. Enough Comfort my heart with a letter or two I am rather knocked over by seeing you depart, and feeling rather bound I have the consolation (Poor ! Poor !) of knowing that you will long heartily for Gordon Street after a week's absence Well . Good-bye ! I wish you all joy Demitroïa, your COMPANION, Hinchliffe, and the 3 jolly good fellows rolled into the one Tuck, whom I know and love

To Miss Hardman

SEAFORD, SUSSEX, July 12, 1863.

MOST FAIR AND DEAR SCEPTIC,—Now it was told of a man that an angel leaned out of heaven and dropped to

into that enormous Black Pit Daylight is with you, dear Mrs Aurora ! And I hope that in subscribing my self I may really prove as responsive to the ray of light received from you this morning as did the Stoney Harpist of old, and so earn the right to be your ever nothing other than

GEORGE MEMNON

PS —I send my love to the household

N B —Tell me who has got most in the scramble And Oh ! Please somebody wish that I may get a fillip of encouragement on Tuesday morning here and shall perhaps shut my eyes and let my heart steer me—which it doesn t always do badly, does it ?—Not falsely I am sure And if poor fellow he goes wrong and meant right why he s certain to lead one to experience which taken properly, is wealth wisdom !—and Hurrah !

To William Hardman

SEAFORD July 14 1863

I find I cannot get the reading and Foakes both done, and so collapse like a demnitton bladder Woe s me Tuck !

Chapman must have some MSS immediately read On the whole I do see that it s the right thing for me to work straight on this year I lose a great pleasure dear Tuck ! Think of me If you can spare time or are blessed with a rainy day write to me My warmest salute to Demitrona The same properly chpped and cooled to Your Companion My love to you All joy with you I had ordered a travelling suit and got half ready to come !—Yours lastingly

GEORGE M

though the position be denied to me) pray assure that young lady that I am pervaded by the very warmest interest in her welfare, and claim, by right of my expressed admiration (that excessive daring might call affection) of another and greater from whom she springs, to declare that my sentiments on her behalf are parental in their depth.

All this means that if I can, can, can—I will. that there is just a chance that I am going to make the spring, and if the ring don't swing I may cling like anything, and just be caught up to a six weeks' Heaven among you, and nothing short of it under your wing. My state no Weather-cock, with a thunder-storm on the South-east, and the wind North-west, would describe Pierrot straightening hands and legs to dance facing the four corners alternately would look foolish beside me. A newly-caged wild cat might outwardly represent my condition. I boil to come I am frozen. There comes a thaw. In a twinkling I am all rosily rippling like a summer sea in the calm confidence that I shall go. Then blight falls I find myself stripped like a gladiator fighting with a single sword against the three Women of the Net and the Thread. A voice whispers 'If you cut the net the thread will likewise be severed.' I swoon and the hideous spectres cry, 'Tis done!' Oh, my dear Madame! Are you one of the Three why do you teach happy men to love you? For I love not that Tuck at all. He has taken to swearing of late. His letters come on me louder than Blatchington Battery hard by, which blew off a volunteer artilleryman to Neptune's bosom some time ago. I say I love not that Tuck. He is profane. a puffed out insolent Friar—who goes about saying that He is the better half of 'WE'. If I come I shall delight in the snubbing of him. My Goodness! Suppose, after all, I do not come! It is of no use looking

not seeing that I had to meet the Son at Shoreditch station that evening He is I thanl the Lord ! well and brisk Have you decided anent the title of the house ? I could only help you with criticism No really taking name struck me I go to Norwich with Arthur in about two weeks, and have multitudinous en gagements but will keep myself pledged to you for a week in May—Now that Emilia s off my mind alas ! Poetry presses for speech ! I fear I am unless I mal o great effort chained to this unremunerative business for a month or so I am getting material for the battle scenes in Emilia in Italy But I have an English novel of the real story telling order that must roll off soon and precede it¹ Minor tales too and also an Auto biography Which to be at first is the point and while I hesitate comes a Wayside piece, a sonnet a song— Ambition says— Write this grand Poem I smile idiotic and should act with all due imbecility but for Baker s bills and Boy —Know me ever your loving

GEORGE MEREDITH

To William Hardman

CORSHAM August 1 1863

MY DEAR BELOVED TUCK !—Poco is off started on Friday for Havre for Bordeaux for Bayonne the Pyrenees and so round to Dauphiné He has gone but the hold of the terrible fellow is on me still I am fast bound by my word to meet him at Grenoble and tread the Dauphine Alps with him and the ways that he pleases to take me I cannot resist him He has a damnable calm way and I couldn t start till Sons had gone How I am to do it at all I cannot imagine but apparently it must be The chances of our meeting on

¹ Rhoda Fleming The Autobiography frequently spoken of was never written

To William Hardman.

COPSHAM, July 10, 1863.

... Lucas wants me to begin in 'O. a W.' the end of October I do not think I can. And how can I possibly ... and my last chapter of *Emilia* to retouch and the proofs ... *Le Pauvre Lucas!* . Let me tell you that *Poco* has this day gained, after 3 astounding efforts, admission to the ranks of the *Pantagruehans* . Of *Sons*, let me say, that they are wonderfully browned by Seaford sun and breeze and very jolly If I come, he will stay at Copsham

Tuck! I don't think —

'No more,' the dark Confessor said '

'I know him one of many thou '

He, when thy heart is won, is fled

For ages he has done as now

'There is no hope . thou canst not rest

Obedient to his wanton whim,

Yea, North and East, and South and West,

For ever must thou follow him

'Young Cupid was he called of old .

That Will o' Wisp incorporate

Tuck is he named, a reveler bold,

To follow him is ay thy fate

'He hath thee in a golden mesh,

And thee will have for evermore

He is a Genius of the Flesh—'

—Yet still, my Tuck, I thee adore.

To Captain Maxse

COPSHAM, ESHER.

DEAR MAXSE,—I could not answer your letter in time on Thursday, and much as I wished to come to you, could

Ips J You see the 'Times' of course I spare you paper news Old Copsham is pretty sound, the Beetle soars

The Beetle soars the Beetle spins
 The Beetle is up in the air Tuck
 Twill crack Robin's crown
 As a stamp for his sins
 Or make him defy old care

Pray, write and say how (the route) and when (the weel) you return Poco says I must start on the 22nd

I suppose you have not come across Jessopp? He has promised to journey here, and I hope will take back Sons with him My poor darling begins to see dimly again that holidays have a termination 'If I had not such a kind master!' he remarks 'I am very happy down there Papa you know! You see Tuck he has his choice of different kinds of happiness Blessed is he who can even look on such alternatives for a little human soul I am twice blest for that my friend is happy as well as my Son

Tuck I am going to bed If I dream, sail thou across the vision like a jolly monkish owl

My jolly Friar now lift thy cowl
 And send me a laugh like a revelling owl
 Were I lying and groaning in pits of fire
 Thy laughter like water would fall my Friar!

Good night Tuck Good night dear Demitroia
 Good night to the two young ladies! I say! Have they been much admired? Cause we won't have our English wild roses stared at by mannikin foreigners Tuck have you been a zealous guardian of those treasures? Alas! Who would have done that duty like me? There is a song called Poor Robin Sing it Poco started

the Continent this year are small, and Oh Tuck ! I should have liked it so !

Lucas has just written to say that Tom Trollope follows Eleanor's Vic. in O. a W., so there is no immediate pressure for me, save to hand my proofs to friends .

I have been to Goodwood with the Fitzgerald Champagne-Loo party . saw much life, which I wanted backed wrong horses lost £5. Certain, however, of knowing my lesson. Wise grows the loser, merely happy the winner A great pastime ! The scene was gloriou, We elbowed dukes : jostled lords were in a flower-garden of countesses.

Another publisher has requested me to read for him . discern, and select. I never refuse work. Of this more by and by For the present, Mum—Oh ! How my mouth water, my heart leaps, at the thought of Tuck planted, as 'twere, in the very eye of the Gods, the roseay crowing British Cock ! Store a thousand reminiscences for me. I cannot bear to think of leaving England just about the period of your return, and missing Demitroia's smiles and rapid recitation of adventures and fun There is something dreadful about Poco. He is not as other men. He won't believe in my impossibilities. Tuck ! I am sorry we have admitted him amongst us, I am It was your doing. Poco persists. He is never satisfied with my answers, if I do not assent When once I do, or half do, he treats me as a man of honour, and I am fixed He has sailed, as secure of me, as if he had me at Grenoble already I shall send the S. R to Chamounix a day after this letter Sons are in good case I hope your darlings are well but of them you are at least well informed If you had not thought proper to cut off communication between the great mother and me, I might have told you particulars of them

Well !—Parliament's up ! I think Morley will do my

Head uninjured as far as human eye can reckon This day he was allowed to get up Yesterday he swallowed food without immediately rejecting it He is not much the worse for his terrible mishap quite cheerfully he slightly damns himself for mounting such a big horse but excuses W— Poor W— has been in a great way It is no comfort to me to make another miserable when I am struck and it is of no use to examine a catastrophe which I am sure he will not help to repeat

Well Tuck my darling is returned to me out of the jaws of death W— says he is thankful I was spared the sight which will haunt him till he dies He feared to look at Arthur making sure that he was killed Had it been on the road or had the little fellow's boot not been of elastic sides the worst must have happened The boot wrenched off is somewhere on the common now, no one knows where The distance Arthur was dragged was about 50 yards as far as I can make out There Tuck! We have put up our Thank song to the Supreme

With this I forward the Saturday How little poor Ethel knows the danger her brother has run Break it to her quietly Write a jolly long letter if you can manage saying whether you return before the 21st August And by what route when you do return If things go well with Sons I join Poco in Grenoble on the 24th leaving England the 22nd I should like to see you first

Jessopp is en route homeward He wrote from Aachen and will probably be at Copsham on Saturday if the news concerning Arthur does not bring him before Say sweet things to Demitroia or let as many pass your douane as you consider for her good and your own Hoping the young ladies are not getting troublesome — Your loving

GEORGE MEREDITH

under a big full moon. I cry for a blessing upon you all, and sleep

August 1, 1863

MY DEAR FRIENDS,—I re-open to tell you what might have been the saddest tale I should ever have to tell

Yesterday, W— found Arthur out alone, put him on his horse, after shortening the stirrups, and suddenly let go the reins, for some purpose unknown ; my little darling was carried off, fell, dangled to the stirrup and was dragged headlong over the furze. Not killed ! Mercifully spared and no bones broken but the shaking has been tremendous. He lies upstairs, and was miserable till this morning. Had he been kicked, or dragged on a road, I should have had a shattered heap of all I loved given to my arms. He was saved by a short length, and by his boot being pulled off (He had elastic sides to them) Izod says he is doing well. He can't keep anything on his stomach, and complains of his head but he sleeps soundly and calmly : breathes peacefully. My poor lamb !—‘ Oh ! is it a dream ? ’ he said, as I undressed him after the accident. He can now recount all that happened till he was dragged. I think I may hope that he will recover, and be as sound as he was. Of poor W— it is useless to speak. He is sorry, of course—Don't be distressed, for you know I should not be quiet at heart if all did not look very hopeful. I have had a rude blow. I will write to you in 3 days. God bless you

GEORGE MEREDITH

To William Hardman

CORSHAM, ESHER, August 5, 1863

MY DEAR TUCK,—Sons are on their legs again ! The poor little fellow is very weak and somewhat shaky, covered with bruises. but vitally sound, bones alright.

by a horse and were blue behind the ear with stern
quarters creaking rather I want restoration Tuck
being absent I go to Nature in her sublimest Greet
Demitroia and her children from your loving

GEORGE MEREDITH

To William Hardman

PICCADILLY Augst 20 1863

DEAR TUCK—I am coming to you Shall be at Hôtel
Choréul on Friday or Saturday for Heaven's sake
be there Make that we meet I bring article in *On W*
America etc and *Vie de Jésus* by Renan one of the
finest works of this generation—Yours in all love (with
½ to Demitroia) GEORGE MEREDITH

I start to night Newhaven and Dieppe

To William Hardman

Sept 16 1863.

TUCK!—I am of return I come to arrive on Sunday
and amid such a press of work I try to recover my
native tongue I must tell you of our travels by and by
Suffice that Poco was at the station (It is one of his
vanities to be coolly punctual He meets you as though
he said 'You see I promised to be sighting the North
Pole at 9 A M on the 27th August 1861') He was there
We went to the Grando Chartreuse filling all the valleys
on approach with the joint names of Tuck and Demitroia
We slept there We walled away with 9 bottles of
Liqueur and toiled over mountain passes Through
Dauphiné we walled We walked ourselves into—
silence Our ordinary course was 10 hours per diem
sometimes it went to 13 We crossed Mont Gendvre into
Italy to Turin to Lago Maggiore, then over Pied
montese mountains and lovely valleys into Switzerland
to Geneva thence to Dijon where Poco, reaching me

To William Hardman.

August 11, 1863

MY DEAR TUCK.—This letter is a chance shot sent at you: for I doubt you will have left Chamounix before it arrives. My darling boy is going on alright. His head, though bruised and blue behind the ear, is sound, and his little innocent rump, which occasionally twitches him, is on the whole as well capable of taking what his conduct may earn him as yours, Tuck, or mine. The recovery is wonderful. I thought while I was at his side that first night of the accident that has befallen you and marked you for going through the performance for your Robin's comfort in future years. His boot (elastic sides saved him) still travels at a swift pace over the common, and will be re-discovered by a succeeding generation. Jessopp and his wife come on Friday. Arthur returns to them this day week. On the Thursday following I am off to join awful Poco, who has written to fix me irrevocably. He was at Bordeaux, at claret hard as he could. Impassively. Can you not see him? Full of this wine he was starting for the Pyrenean baths. Pretty well for a youngster! I cannot yet make you understand, that among the sons of the Great Mother, we count our time from the hour we first saw Tuck. He says: 'Tell Tuck he is to come home by Grenoble' be there (Hôtel de l'Europe) on the 24th, 'which is Robin's day of appointment.' Lord! How I wish you could do it! Eh? Tuck? I would go on upon this theme, but I have the ridiculous idea that I shall be bawling persuasion at Chamounix while you are a day distant across the Alps. My letter will catch you or be 24 hours too late. Still if you get this, think seriously of the possibility of your coming home by Grenoble, for I want to see you, mightily. I now desire to join Poco, for I feel as if I had been dragged

with a man etc So the sentimental worshipper will always make them animals God bless you Tuck—Your loving

ROBIN

To Miss Katherine Vulliamy

ESHER SURREY Oct 28 1863

DEAR MISS VULLIAMY—Thursday is unhappily my one day in the week when I am in harness and have to do Press duty in London On Monday too my engagement to go on a yachting expedition to the Channel Islands holds me bound I fear But if this can be put off I shall come to you gladly I would much rather be in Mickleham If the fates drag me away notwithstanding I may hope to be permitted to call on you when I return? And since it pains you that I should take long walks to no purpose I will also take the liberty of consulting you d'avance though let me assure you again the length of my journey is not to be deplored As to my walking back at night I am an associate with owls and nightjars tramps and tinkers who teach me nature and talk human nature to me If I stay in Mickleham do I not lose those privileges of a neighbour who bows himself out to his own bed and is therefore welcomed without formality? But during my first visit I should be ungracious not to accept Mr Vullamy's invitation in all its particulars I beg that you will thank him in my name

On consideration I thought that 'The Ordeal' could not do you harm I can only trust that it will not offend It deals with certain problems of life and is therefore not of a milky quality I am afraid that it requires stout reading If you weather it unshocked, you will find my other works less trying—I am dear Miss Vullamy most faithfully yours

GEORGE MEREDITH

the hand of friendship and shutting up the tongue of seduction, but parting in fact very prettily, set out for Liége . I for Paris, remaining there four days of delight, save for the absence of one —Strange chapter of the Book of Sandars have we to narrate a few little adventures : peculiarities of Poco (he has a right proper feeling towards Demitroia , and the germs of reverence for Tuck), etc We went too fast. We trudged like packmen Still I have much enjoyed the trip : am better, fresher. The weather was so-so . neither very bad, nor Tuck-like To Ethel my love, and to Nellie To D T much warmth of affection I heard at Geneva that the blessed little man goes on all well —Your loving GEORGE MEREDITH.

To William Hardman

CORSHAM, Oct 21, 1863

DEAR AND SWEET TUCK !—Your aid I rejoice in your suggestions I for the most part follow, bowing the head of acquiescence to almost all your emendations I believe you too, when you say you like the work, and the thought comforts me The night of the day you read this, we dine at Poco's papa's table You don't mention having heard from Chapman ? I suppose they delay that they may consult me as to sum I must see you before I speak as to my own SUM Do you think that, as novels go now, I may fix something huge ? or content me with a medium, and, snuffling a low content, say Such is the world ? Or, if I can't get my price, take all the risk ? You say that 'stress' is arbitrary—wrong 'Her flanks' seem to strike one on the temple out of the printer's page On the whole nothing could be neater than your criticism. Maxse is amusing Objects to her conduct in going with Gambia 'because every girl is conscious that she should never trust herself alone

to be watched And the medicines of the old system do not suit him Even for a trifling illness I wish him to have the attendance of a homœopathic physician—I should imagine that if you see languor it arises from indigestion — constitutional weakness of digestion I should like him to have a course of cod liver oil If Mrs Jessopp thinks good I will send him some down from Savory & Moore's And as a drink at dinner some light claret mixed with Brighton Seltzer Water, might inspirit him Would you allow of this? Any other wine, or beer, he must not take I don't want to give trouble but my heart broods over him, and I am unmanned at a breath of doubt concerning him—I told you that his powers of acquisition would not be marred But you will find by and by that he has sucked in much and made use of it in his own way He will never be a gladiator but he may be a thiner I expect him to be a man of sense If only—and hero my sails flap the mast miserably I would come down at once but my fresh work detains me I have my hands full Mrs Jessopp will be moved to give me the state of the case Will you tell her that a hamper will come for Arthur this week containing among things more precious to him, the necessaries she wrote for I had much to discourse on to you

This doubtless very silly perturbation of the parental mind chases the gabble from my tongue God bless you I have perhaps scarcely recovered from the shock of the accident during Arthur's holidays The tone of a word relating to him makes me melancholy For myself it takes much to make me hang out that yellow flag for an hour even —Your loving GEORGE MEREDITH

To Arthur G. Meredith.

Autumn 1863.

MY OWN DEAR LITTLE MAN!—We went on the water yesterday and fished, and I caught nothing; but Mr. Johnson hooked an enormous Jack of a quarter of a pound weight, which makes him very proud. I should like to have my darling boy with me. But you shall come here some day. There are beautiful meadows by the brink of the stream, on one side, and on the other, tall thick woods hanging close over the water. The Thames is very different from the river Inn or the Adige, or the Passeyr. It is quite smooth, and broad, and still, green with reflection of the trees and herbage, a capital place for you to bathe in.—Remember me to Tom, with whom I have no doubt you are getting on well. If you want anything, write me word of it. But I should like to hear from you, in any case, so sit down the day that you receive this, and write me a few lines, that I may hear from my dear little man the best news that can come to me—that he is quite well and quite happy.—Your loving Papa,

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To the Rev. Augustus Jessopp.

Esher, Autumn 1863

MY DEAR JESSOPP,—You say that you are anxious about my little man. You take the wind out of all my sails. Pardon me, but I shall have no peace till I hear whether I have dwelt on the word too strongly. If you are only anxious as to his mental briskness, I am not alarmed, and I know also that he 'potters' and plays after his own fashion and is not a boisterous fellow. But I am always open to fear for his physical health. His circulation is not rapid, his stomach is weak. He requires

Chapman Camden Park Tunbridge Wells The name
of her house is Hollyshaw God bless my dear little
man prays his loving Papa, GEORGE MEREDITH

To William Hardman

LONDON Nov 13 1863

DEAREST TUCK my bonny wild duck whom I might
have addressed to off Flushing but for the fact that
in 17 hours and $\frac{1}{2}$ you come homeward rushing (turning a
tail of marvellous breadth I believe it still darkens the
Dutchmen) I have written to Maxse and now let me
ax ye if Chapman & Hall are such men with wonderful
powers must your Robin possessed be, able to run with
them fairly Tis Frederick's fault that no answer you
had had as letters he writes but rarely Old Edward
tells me this and remarks you shall quickly a cheque
get commensurate As for the conduct of the Firm
he admits with a shrug that I properly censure it The
thing would be settled at once but Fred is taking a little
holiday (the sixth in 6 weeks)—Adieu

When we meet next time will be my jolly day

Signed ROBIN

To Mrs Janet Ross

ESHER Dec 1 1863

MY DEAREST JANET—I have put back my letter think-
ing I might get some book to offer you You know that
I recommended you for Renan's *Vie de Jésus* Chapman
has the offer of it and would have done it with your
name mixed up with it But our worthy and most dis-
creet Bart declined to have your name mixed up with it
As things go perhaps he was right So the book went
to Trubner—You remember Adams whom your mother
sent to the altar first and subsequently to me? He is
now flourishing if the being able to buy a business comes

To William Hardman.

ESHIRE, SURREY, Nov. 3, 1863

MY DEAR TUCK,—I am under extraordinary press of work and must also rewrite 2 'frolic' chapters but I believe I shall see you on Thursday at least, even if you go into the heart of the gale, instead of dancing diabolus on vexed waters · for time enough to squeeze your hand If the wind rages I shall yet the more wish myself by your side. I am whelmed with MSS. , full of envy of you fine men, dejected as regards this novel, full of confidence for the future.—Ever your loving

GEORGE M

To Arthur G. Meredith

COPSHAM COTTAGE,
ESHIRE, Nov 12, 1863

MY DEAR LITTLE MAN !—Island Pond is frozen over, and all the common looks as you saw it that Christmas morning when we walked over to Oatlands. Sandars is seen sometimes, with brown gaiters and a green tunic His legs continue to grow, but his body does not All your playthings, your theatre, books, etc., are put away, but you can get at them easily when you return. You can imagine how glad I shall be to hear your voice again in this neighbourhood , and if I were not working very hard, I should find the place too dull to live in, without you. Shall I hear at Christmas, that you have been learning, and have got a little more friendly with your Latin Grammar ? Mind you don't waste your time If you do your best, I shall be satisfied Tell me the names of the boys you play with most, and what fellows you think are the best I suppose you see Mr Sandys Have you been to Mrs Clabburns ? Let me be sure that I shall have a letter from you every week. When you have written to Captain Maxse, you must write to Mrs. Edward

excitement I hoped to see her on my return but I heard that she was not alone and in the end as I was making up my mind to write for an audience, the news came that she had just reached Calais I smote my undecided head I am vexed beyond measure at having missed her The news of her is so good that it tastes like fresh life to me On this head please give me particulars And if she could be persuaded to write how glad I should be !

I am here at Copsham still Next year I shall have the place to myself, to buy or lease I hope to be able to buy it and then it may be made agreeable for friends At present none but men can come Some are usually here from Saturday to Monday Of the Eshenians I see next to nothing —By the way Izod behaved very nicely in his attendance on Arthur—just as you said would be the case He was cheerful from the first You can conceive my condition From six in the evening to half past four in the morning my darling was insensible only saying once Oh ! is it a dream ! and staring wildly He had on elastic boots and this fact saved him If the boot had not come off he would have been dragged till—I have looked over into the pit I don t think I misbehaved myself and I certainly did not reproach poor W—, of whose folly we need not speal seeing that he won t renew it There is every reason to feel sure that Arthur has taken no damage whatever nor I think is his pluck at all lessened

Your Holbeins ! I went to get them done and was told that the Kensington Museum had been remonstrated with by photographers generally and had abandoned the work I tried to get Dante Rossetti to give me his I have thought of numerous things to supplant them but jewels seem the only resource, though I can t bear to see them either on arm neck or fingers You will receive something or other (overlooking my bad taste) with my

under that term. He consulted me after taking that step, or I think he would not have purchased Saunders and Otley's. But so it is. He is now Saunders & O. At his earnest request I advise him. Of course this is a secret. The position will put books for translation in my way, now and then. I had one the other day, but the translator's name was requisite 'Une bouchée de pain'. Mrs. Gally does it. Murray called at Jeff's to get the copyright two days after Adams had secured it.

Now of myself a little. Can I ever forget my dearest and best woman-friend? And I must be cold of heart not to be touched by your faithfulness to your friendships. I, who let grief eat into me and never speak of it (partly because I despise the sympathy of fools and will not trouble my friends), am thereby rendered rather weak of expression at times. The battle is tough when one fights it all alone. And it is only at times that I awake from living in a darker world. But I am getting better, both in health and spirit. It is my punishment that I have to tell you what I never prove, that I love you and shall do so constantly. For I hold nothing dearer than your esteem, my dear! Writing letters seems a poor way of showing it, and yet even that I don't do! But you never vary. If you were like me, our lights would soon pass out of sight of one another, leaving me many regrets, certainly, but I acknowledge you to be the fixed star of this union, as you will be one of mine forever. So, pardon this sentimentalism. As I said, it's my punishment to have to put my case in such a tone—I fancy, too, that your instinct believes me true to the memory of our old kindness, careless of it though I appeal?

The noble Bart gave me capital accounts of you and my lost Lady. The accident occurred to Arthur while she was at Poole. When he went to Norwich, I started at once for Italy to get fresh scenery and extraneous

To William Hardman

Dec 1 1863

DEAREST LOVELY TUCK—I dine with Maxse at the 'Garrick' to-morrow, and as I want to converse with you on the matter of your objections to points in *Emilia* I should like to know whether you can give me a bed cause if you can you will which is established in my mind but if you can will you send a line to Chapman & Hall's, or better to Maxse at the 'Garrick' containing the wished word for me Yes say to Maxse at the Garrick (with my initials in the corner of the address) and then I'll come to talk and fight him but with full acknowledgement of the soundness of some of his criticism and value of his advice I am glad that Tuck likes it on the whole It's impossible to tell him what difficulty I get myself into by altering my original conception of the scheme—Your own

ROBIN

To Mrs Jessopp

ESHER Dec 1863

MY DEAR MRS JESSOPP—The Son blooms in the air of home How could I have stopped away from my living heart so long? But I have him and won't moan that it's only for six weeks More than ever do I thank the blessed chance that inspired you to make yourselves known to me and render me the most deeply indebted of men For I see not only that every care is taken of my darling under your roof but that happiness is his vital air there He breathes it Shall he not be robust in spirit? At least I have faith in the experiment

Now I have an engagement to go to my friend Maxse with Arthur next month—a visit long delayed by me and not to be put off But you must come to me this time will you not? I should be grieved to miss

novel in January. It is called 'Emilia in England' antiposed to 'Emilia in Italy,' which is to follow—both in 3 vols. The first is a contrast between a girl of simplicity and passion and our English sentimental, socially-aspiring damsels. The second (in Italy) is vivid narrative (or should be). I hope you will like it—I can't guess whether you will. You saw, I suppose, that the Saturday Review has gently whipped me for 'Modern Love.' I am not the worse. And doubtless the writer meant well. I regret to say that I can't give up writing poetry, which keeps your poet poor.

You were charmed with Kinglake's book? In style it beats anything going, but in judgment it is bad, and it cannot take place as a piece of artistic history. Here is Maxse writing hard against it, he being a reverent admirer of Lord Raglan and a just man. Kinglake's treatment of the French is simply mean—And mean too is the position England assumes as critic everywhere—as actor nowhere, if it can be helped. We are certainly in a mess about this Congress, and the French alliance is a matter of the past.

I read the 'Times' Alexandrian correspondent diligently to catch the friend's hand behind the official pen¹.

How good of you to look forward to my little man's future! Who knows? He might be found fit to be a merchant, and what offer could be better than yours? But I must first get at his inclinations and try his strength.

Now, my dearest good Janet, adieu for a space—till I repeat it. Write to me. Give my warm regards to your husband, and know me ever, your loving

GEORGE MEREDITH

Arthur comes home on the 23rd. He will write to you before the month closes.

¹ Mrs Ross was now acting as a correspondent of the *Times* in Egypt.

Your words on Norwich School Prize Day appeared in
I J¹

Arthur sends his love to Mrs Jessopp, and I ask you, what privileges are these of his years that enable him to send that pretty wheedling word, while I have to content myself with 'regards'! I am almost tempted to say with exclamatory dramatic cockney bards for sooth after it. And I mean so much more don't you see! But there are things one endures with one's acceptance into practical life—collars likewise. When collars and tail coats are abolished—well! I shouldn't like to be photographed then. However till I wear that broad grin, I am your loving

GEORGE M

To William Hardman

CORSHAM Jan 12 1864

My bones dear Tuck, are more eloquent to me of the ball on Friday night than I shall be to you. Old Parsimony must be right. 'You changed thick breeches for thin thick socks and boots for thin capering patients and out in that ther frost and then wonders you feels akins in your bones and calls it indigestion and I—s wine. Yesterday I walked to Mickleham with Sons taking him on my back returning and then 2 miles in a fly so that he wasn't tired. It didn't cure me I shiver and feel like an ancient frame. The Ball? I try to remove the mists of jaundice but I cannot get a view of it without some yellow. It was frightful to me. The young women (saving the Clarke girls) were hideous the old ones talked of the weather and shivered as I do now at the recollection of my suffering.

My dear Tuck if you want a sight of the room, open your piano lid strike on the notes and see the little

¹ *Ipswich Journal*

you ! I wish to know when you are to be in London . . . the date ! And I will conform to it. Please reply , so that I may write to my now impatient sea-captain, who will not believe that I mean to be with him at all And tell me of Gordon, and of your Christmas.

Thackeray's death startled and grieved me And I, who think I should be capable of eyeing the pitch-black King if he knocked for me in the night !—Alas for those who do not throw the beetle !—Of Emilia I cannot speak She grieves me I have never so cut about a created thing. There 's good work in her but the work ? That note of interrogation is in person —Your faithful

GEORGE MEREDITH

To the Rev Augustus Jessopp.

ESHER, Jan 1864

MY DEAR JESSOPP,—Shall you be in Town and visible to me, on Wednesday, on Thursday, on Friday week ?

Do, write and tell me you are well · for, all my friends are croaking , fog is about . blue mould sits on the fair aspect of Companionship, and I want to know that somebody 's all right My son is all right I am not all right Emilia Belloni is not all right She has worried me beyond measure, and couldn't expect to be all right. She will be, when she 's in Italy As to character, I think you will have no doubt of her flesh and blood. How you will like the soul of the damsel, I can't guess. Out in February

Are you rejoicing at an Heir to England's Throne ? Have you not admired the loyal leaders of Jeames de la Pluche in the 'Times' ?—My Prins ! It is of course matter for quiet hearty congratulation, but I confess that this excited flunkeyism of our Press makes one even look at the other extreme and see a manliness in the American

a title over a cup of claret Any trees to distinguish it ? — Hamble Willows ' Hamble Elms etc — The site of the House impresses me favourably I must have for my daily meal a good plateful of sky , and the sun must drop into it or I m not satisfied I feed on him and the field he traverses This, apparently you will get — How is health with you ? I progress excellently but only to get into a higher circle of desires and hopes despairs and dreams And if a fair face touches me what is there for me but to moan at my loss of philosophy ? Can I go to her and say ' Love me ? She sucks my comfort from my life, and that s all Or not all ! It s experience !—for this were we born My philosophy distils again to just that bitter drop —

Emilia in a fortnight positively Poor little woman ! What will the British P say to a Finis that holds aloft no nuptial torch ? All she does at the conclusion, is to leave England Perhaps you too will be disappointed I trust not

Say to Mrs Maxse that I shall be very anxious to be if not the first one of the first of her guests at Hamble the as yet unnamed And we will go and hear the nightingales as you and I did, my dear fellow when they chuckled a love snatch and your heart had not found a home Note Frost on the May night close at the end of Emilia — You will receive your copy the day she appears Shall you haply review the production ? It s my undertaking—the risk mine and the uncounted profits I told Chapman I should want a good sum, and did not object to publish the book myself He thought the closing alternative best and it may be for me — What are you reading ? What meditating ? The Fates are stirring with a mighty spoon at this hour — May Heaven bless you and yours through it all and soon give me sight of you !—Your loving

GEORGE M

bobbing heads in the interior They bob to some purpose, but oh ! this sight ! Esher's young men were hardly better than its females—I use the word in all its offensiveness At 12 midnight supper Champagne Cup (small beer, sweetened, with a fizz) to wash down incarnate dyspepsia in a room $\frac{1}{2}$ frost $\frac{1}{2}$ fire All partook of Champagne-cup I have the satisfaction of knowing that I pressed it upon 2 , filling my own glass at the same time, and speeding it down the table with admirable dexterity. I left at 2 A M I am told that some young men, called upon by I—— to cheer the ladies, the hostesses of the evening, did so until they were drunk I pardon their frail stomachs W——, after a bottle of Moselle, gave a sniff and lit a cigar, and refused to go But that Robin always keeps his appointments, he would have followed the captain's example I walked to Esher and walked home, and precious co-wo-wo-wold it was, Tuck. Yes, a short article on Wn Australia would help me I do not think I can come to you on Thursday On Friday to Maxse

My Jeames's expressions of joy in the 'Times' on the Royal Baby have been magnificent, and should procure for the family la Pluche, a patent of nobility. Love to that changeful creature Demitroïa I send you proofs of 'Emilia' Forward them to Johnson, Bullion Office, Bank —Your loving

ROBIN

To Captain Maxse

Esher, 1864

MY DEAR MAXSE,—I had thought of 'Hamble Ridge,' and also of 'Hamble Mount,' which latter, though more common, is perhaps preferable Either one would do very well Is there any characteristic of the river to give it christening ? as a reach, a bluff—'Hamble Reach' would not sound ill. We should sit together and give it



To William Hardman

Jan 21, 1864

SWEET TUCK,—I bring Sons to go to Rossetti to have his face taken If I can I will get away and sleep at Gordon Square. Happily he mayn't be at home I shall not be later than $\frac{1}{2}$ past ten —Your loving and grateful

ROBIN

Love to the fickle one.

To the Rev Augustus Jessopp

ESHLR

MY DEAR JESSOPP,—As to the book! One of Chapman & Hall's men put a paper on it, with your name, and returned it He has written to Mudie to that effect, but stupidly delayed doing so The matter must be set right in a few days, and I am sorry exceedingly that your kindness should have given you such bother—I met Clabburn and Sandys the other night at Arthur Lewis's Sandys has some fine conceptions for pictures. Altogether, he is one of the most remarkable of the 'brushes' of our day, with the quaintest stolid Briton way of looking at general things But artists see their square of canvas and little more—add the gilt frame Sandys has a romantic turn that lets me feed on him —What you say of Arthur requiring to make blood to be lively in body and mind, is my view and shows me that we strike one note. Let men make good blood, I constantly cry. I hold that to be rightly materialist—to understand and take nature as she is—is to get on the true divine highroad That we should attain to a healthy humanity, is surely the most pleasing thing in God's sight Now, of another matter. The book is to be published at my risk and for my profit It will be out in a fortnight. In a month from that date I can draw something Meantime, if any pressure should be perchance on you, you, my friend,



Art & Colored by
Franklin D. Prentiss



will let me know and I will get what is wanted and forward it Nothing but my carelessness puts me behind in my money accounts I make, apart from novels enough for Arthur and myself It comes and goes If this novel does not pay well I shall retrench rigidly, book my bills deny friends have no purse, and look above the head of the crossing sweeper I know that you understand how the delay has been superinduced It will hardly occur again I have trusted to your good heart in full faith as doubtless you feel That I should at all inconvenience you is not necessary, and you will always speak openly on that head—as I am now acting—will you not ? The novel has good points and some of my worst ones It has no plot albeit a current series of events but being based on character and continuous development it is not unlikely to miss a striking success

But hail to the Beetle ! verily I have made new blood by its aid, of the pure crimson from which great Poesies and stern conception should flow ! I am growing fuller of hope and thirst for work I begin to believe again that I may do something Judge me not by this present performance !—I think I may say that I will be with you Heaven consenting the middle of this month Is Arthur correct when he talks of holidays commencing the 23rd of March ?—We shall have much to talk over and, by the way Alys has not arrived O man whose energy did win the admiration of Sandys and myself jointly ! I want to see it I want to see you Give Mrs Jessopp my warmest greeting My heart is with her who watches over my boy

To William Hardman

ESTHER Feb 24 1864

MY DEAR TUCK—I have been away from the Cot I am direly disturbed at my enforced absence from you

I have been disturbed of late at not hearing from him
He now says that he has written The letter did not
arrive Would it be as well to question him on the point
and make inquiries of the housekeeper ?

I am so busy and bothered with work (consequently
doing it ill and —— wrathful and —— utterly un
worthy to hold pen to you) that I break off without a
reply to your remembered last letter Though with
regard to the Sunday arrangements at the School Now
let me assure you O fair advocate that I think you make
wonderful improvements on a state of things rather hurt
ful to Nature in her untamed years Hurtful to her and
therefore she has her revenge a not unholy thing when
we see it to be simply the action of violated laws Young
blood will not sit so frequently and so long on the seventh
day, without a desire to stir which becomes in the brain
a remonstrance

I may say of my dear little fellow that he was not at all
complaining when he spoke to me but casually stated
a fact common to boys Another too it seems, thinks
even the seventh day in Norwich a hard day as hard
or harder than any one of the other six —The truth is,
that our Puritanism is beginning to weary even the English
world and much as you are disposed to lighten the claims
of worship to poor little fellows your being in East Anglia
must of a necessity keep you behind us

Do forgive me for this ! I feel already that the wind
is East on me !

I hope my little man continues to satisfy you ? His
master—it is as I predicted But I am sure things will
turn out better by and by and can wait—content that
he should be under your care—With kindest good fellow
ship salute to your husband I am your most faithful
contrite

GEORGE MEREDITH

and Demitroia and—the G M ! Take G M from the G M what remains ? Nothing I feel as nothing There is an extraordinary fatality about Bullion. He crosses our star, Tuck Not satisfied with robbing you of me, he must now take Morison

What a Thursday evening I shall pass in strong light of Fancy's contrast . All pleasure attend you ! Success wait on you ! Smooth flow the Sauces ! May the fillets tender be ! Nor aught to ruffle the Olympian brows of Tuck, the Host —Being the prayer of his loving

ROBIN

To William Hardman

March 1, 1864

MY DEAREST TUCK,—Your invitation is a mockery. You have combined with Circumstance to keep me from a sight of the Great M On Wednesday to Morison to the 'Wandering Minstrels' at Lord Edward Fitzgerald's after dining with Arthur Lewis . on Friday to a dinner here on Saturday Copsham reception Sunday, guests Monday, Mickleham and so on. Damn you, Tuck ! What do you mean by it ? And, Oh Lord ! I must retrench, for I am going to publish on my own account I give no more to crossing-sweepers, and drink small beer, if Emilia fail to hit her mark Give my respectful compliments to your Mama, and I hope your tum-tum is stronger, old Boy ? I still improve Since I can't see you, write like a dear fellow, and tell me of yourself, Demitroia and the chicks —Arthur flourishes —Your loving

G M.

To Miss Jessopp

March 1864

MY DEAR MRS. JESSOPP,—May I beg you to give my little man, on my behalf, five shillings ? He writes for half-a-crown, but we double it

writing a few stories and shall soon be at a regular jog trot and in a new style Health becoming really good conception blooming I foresee that I shall get knocks on the head from reviewers, and should like to be out of hearing for 3 months but Courage! I am hero with the Son, who is in good condition

I have a work on my hands to correct while the boys are in school 'Mazzini's Works' There's a Red Cloak for you Sir John! With this a tale sketch of novel, etc, my hours are occupied Write and give me Demitrofa's comments—they'll be cruel assure me of your love old boy! And know me GEORGE MEREDITH

To William Hardman

May 1861

RESPECTED SIR—Indeed if you are that same Tuck whom I knew, which is possible a be it you no longer as is told me wear a waistcoat boasting the power to embrace 2 sacks of potatoes if you are the same I know positively that your heart at least will not have diminished and that I am not ejected from it during its daily operations I have been that busy—but more I have besides had engagements so numerous—and besides hero's a man staying with me Sandys, the artist painting a great picture of Spring He came down hero when I came He will remain probably 2 weeks longer Dear sir may I bring him over on Sunday? My dear Old Boy (for it must be you though you do talk so strange) I am very anxious to see you I have been to Norwich to the Isle of Wight to Tunbridge Wells I think I shall have to go to Italy for everybody says 'Emilia in Italy' should be forthcoming as speedily as may be and I want a little local colour You will like Sandys He is a fine painter and a good fellow As regards myself and that's what

To the Rev. Augustus Jessopp

ESHER, 1864

MY DEAR JESSOPP,—Morley's 'Writers before Chaucer' is not 'worth buying,' seeing that I am about to bring this book to you.

Your cheery letter gave me particular peace of mind on a matter that worried me I trust all will go tolerably well with the book, though what the public will make of 3 vols without a climax of incident (Finis waving no nuptial torch)—the climax being all in a development of character—I am at a loss to imagine, and so wait patiently, hoping for here and there a critic to interpret me to the multitude

As to your proposal (for the Whist I 'll be one, notwithstanding that I am led to suppose Mrs Jessopp plays *comme quaté*!)—I must let the boy decide; and think he 'll be for Copsham in the county of Surrey. I expect to be able to come to you next Saturday Or, if Arthur comes to me, shall I bring him back, and stay for a longer term? I know what sharp feminine eyes will discern in this It really isn't base treason—indeed! I am at her mercy. Write by return of post, that I may get the letter before I leave here—Yours ever, GEORGE MEREDITH.

To William Hardman

THE SCHOOL HOUSE,
NORWICH, April 6, 1864.

MY DEAR TUCK,—You will have received a copy of 'Emilia' before this. Though a letter of yours sent to Chapman & Hall was a week old, the laughter in it was fresh And the picture of Tuck with a chumper in his hand talking majestic about his new domain will not speedily pass into spectral tints. I am very busy. To save myself from poetry (which I haven't done) I am

of the subject of school sermons I am vexed and irritated at the treatment you receive but it is of this world —I get slaps for having written 'Emilia I am eminently this or that unpleasant in Review style Have you ever met a Reviewer ? It's curious to see how small this thing that stings can be —She moves which is good A favourable touch to her in the 'Saturday' or 'Times' would launch her into more than the middle of a 2nd edition I am hard at work on Emilia in Italy —All story tell Mrs Jessopp no philosopher present action excitement holding of your breath chilling horror classic sensation I hope to get finished in the Autumn I have also in hand an Autobiography and The Adventures of Richmond Roy and his friend Contrivance Jack Being the History of Two Rising Men —and to be a spanking bid for popularity on the part of this writer

I say ! what a charming line of Rail from Norwich to London by way of Ipswich But apparently little known for those who took the journey from Norwich on a day last month were alone in the carriage the entire length of the route and really it is hard for a young lady demands all your resources to amuse her and I wonder whether I did ! She wants a photograph of the little man Could one be got for her ? She is well practising music early and I still wonder why both of you won't think her very handsome The will is clearly manifested in your refusal to do so I mean handsome of that style Some vitality being wanted but the lack of it practically compensated by so very much sweetness Thus may a cold but friendly spectator speak of her !

Sandys will have been with me next Friday just three weeks He is painting country for background of a picture of the maiden Spring

Then came fair May the fairest maid on earth

you like to hear of, I know, I am working at divers things Wayside Pieces, Odes (To Garibaldi and Beethoven), Sonnets, 'Emilia in Italy,'¹ the Autobiographic Tale, heaps of MSS. Are not my hands full? So 's my heart, but there 's always a comfortable chamber there for you both I was at Cambridge during Newmarket week with certain undergraduates. The Cook of Trinity distinguished himself nightly

I rode on Beacon turf, but did not bet I wanted to study the scene, and have done so I saw my Prins

I am in the best of spirits, as perhaps you divine Health is good and so is power to work, and one daren't pray for more They elected me for the Garrick. My Tuck, to whom the honour How is Poco? There 's no room for him here, or I should have made the request for his society. Write to your much-tried friend, and never judge him harshly.

I have an instinct that Demitroïa has found more excuses for me than you have — Your loving

GEORGE MEREDITH

Ethel and Nellie must be well, of course, since they are barely mentioned My love to them.

To the Rev. Augustus Jessopp

ESHER, May 18, 1861

MY DEAR JESSOPP,—The (Ipswich) Journal is so full of advertisements that I am postponed, anent the notice of Sermons, weekly, and can't predicate when it will appear. Meantime, send a volume to C. Warren Adams, Esq., 66 Brook St., Hanover Square. He will review it (and at least without hostility) in the Church and State Review I hope this month, but am not certain. I shall try to get a fellow to notice them in a general discussion.

¹ Later named 'Vittoria.'

come on a mission with me next Wednesday You will be away all night, but Demitroia will excuse it seeing that it is to make me a new man I will come on Monday evening or Tuesday afternoon I hope to get Emilia in Italy into the Cornhill Tell my dearest D that she will be launched on a sea of adventure and excitement, and by the way thank her for the pretty notice I saw to day in the 'Saturday' She gives her criticism very gently But (tell her this) there is an end now to my working with puppets I enter active life with my people and my resolve to merit money,—which should mean to make it Health sound and brain in fine working order I must stop or I shall be rushing into betraying exclamations It will not be a severe task for you this service I require of my friend D at your elbow starts one brilliant guess She is right Good bye—Your loving

GEORGE M

To William Hardman

MICKLEHAM June 1 1864

MY DEAR HARDMAN—Here the word is that Saturday will do better Also will that suit you? Please send word to Ch & H's I shall come to Mickleham on Friday and my M says we will meet you at Leatherhead station on Saturday if you will assure us of the train you will come by She adds that you are to speak your full conviction of me seeing that her Papa can't bear to lose her though he always lets his daughters have their way in these matters sauf the guarantee of moral character and sufficient pecuniary resources these are the points God bless you and take all my thanks for your good heart (and D's) to me in this the closest business that ever hugged my heart —Your own

GEORGE M

with heaps of flowers at her feet and immense periwigs of apple-blossom about her poll. She with a look of unconsciousness and a rainbow over her head and such larks in the sky a nice girl. We walk hard, though Sandys is not much of a leg at it and develops groaning feet, etc. At $7\frac{1}{2}$ we dine and are uproarious, and I wish and he wishes you were with us. Tom Taylor speaks well of his work in the Academy. I suppose he will be here about a month longer, he has so much to do. He is going to give me a drawing of Arthur, and also of—what's the name? I've forgotten the name of the person, but am not the less grateful for his kindness. This latter in the time to come. I ask him whether he has a message for you, and he says (or tries to say) that one never knows what message to send to those one cares for, except that he'd be glad if you were here.

Since we parted I've been to Tunbridge Wells, to Ventnor, to Cambridge, and half over Surrey. I came here first with Sandys, so you may imagine that I haven't had much time to spare. All kind things to Mrs Jessopp! The young lady who made her acquaintance in Norwich says innumerable kind things of her (I don't mention what is the Norwich return for this ingenuous heartiness). Addio, dear friend—I am your loving

GEORGE MEREDITH

To William Hardman

May 29, 1864

MY DEAREST TUCK,—I daresay you have thought that something was going on to make my love for you seem less faithful and constant than it was. I have an immense deal to tell you, and something to ask you to do. But you must remain mystified until we meet. I would come to-day, but Lethbridge (Smith's partner) is here, and I cannot leave him. Try to hold yourself disengaged to

reverent emotion that I can hardly think it the action of a human creature merely I seem to trace a fable thus far developed by blessed angels in the skies She has been reserved for me my friend It was seen that I could love a woman and one has been given to me to love Her love for me is certain I hold her strongly in my hand Write—I thirst to hear words from you Address to Piccadilly And if Mrs Jessopp can feel that she can congratulate my beloved and thank her for loving me—Ah ! will she let her know this ?—her address is

Miss Marie Vulliamy
Mickleham
near Dorking
Surrey

Also tell Mrs Jessopp that Emilia is running very fast in Italy and that we may hope to see the damsel of the fiery South (no longer tripped and dogged by Philosopher or analyst) by late Autumn I have an arrangement to do a serial for Once a Week and a series of wayside pieces for the Cornhill Sandys illustrating is on the tapis These will ultimately form a volume special and I hope popular Adieu to you both ! Will two be welcome some day ? She has ventured to say that she hopes so
—Your loving

GEORGE MEREDITH

To Captain Maxse

June 6 1864

Esher is the address and your letter to Mickleham astonished us all I read it and handed it to my beloved who said— How heartily he writes ! he must be one of your true friends Pray write to her at once if you have the kindly impulse It will please her for I have talked much of you and my feeling for you of your

To the Rev Augustus Jessopp.

ESHER, June 6, 1864.

MY DEAR JESSOPP,—It is time that your friend should show you a clean breast.—He loves a woman as he never yet loved, and she for the first time has let her heart escape her. She is not unknown to you, as you both immediately divine. She is the sweetest person I have ever known, and is of the family which above all others I respect and esteem. Her father is a just and good man, her sisters are pure gentlewomen: she is of a most affectionate and loving nature. May I be worthy of the love she gives me!

Your surprise over, you will possibly think me rash. My friends, who know of this, think me fortunate, on reflection. They see that I shall now first live, that I shall work as I have never yet done; and that, to speak materially, marriage will not increase the expenses of a man hitherto very careless. My hope stands like a fixed lamp in my brain. I know that I can work in an altogether different fashion, and that with a wife and such a wife by my side, I shall taste some of the holiness of this mortal world and be new-risen in it. Already the spur is acting, and health comes, energy comes. I feel that I can do things well, and not haphazard, as heretofore. I can hardly make less than eight hundred, reckoning modestly. And I shall now hold the purse-strings warily.

I shall not speak to Arthur till he is with me. She is very fond of him, and will be his friend. He will find a home where I have found one.

I cannot play at life. I loved her when we were in Norwich. 'Cathedralising' would not otherwise have been my occupation. I believe that I do her good. I know that she feels it. Me she fills with such deep and

being first bridesmaid and I shall see her The eldest sister is married to a French officer who has an estate in Dauphine and is a good working soldier—a rough diamond, says Marie The eldest unmarried sister Betty, is a person of remarkable accomplishments and very clear intellect, vivacious and actively religious therefore tolerant, charitable, and of a most pure heart Kitty, the present bride, takes her Christianity with more emotion she teaches the children of the parish while Betty every Sunday evening has a congregation of the men and women in a barn Do you smile? Much good has been done by these two women I saw last Sunday a man rescued by Betty from inveterate drunkenness and happy They—indeed all of them are thoroughly loved by the poor throughout the district and respected by all but the party clergyman who declares that their behaviour (Betty chief culprit) has been a scandal and that he will countenance none of them—neither marry them bury them nor in any way bless them I heard him preach last Sunday morning and Oh! alas for Orthodoxy! Marie however (she has strong common sense & have all real emotional natures) takes her own view, and says she thinks Betty wrong in taking the clergyman's work out of his hands But if he doesn't do it? Yes but his curate is anxious to try and Betty has such influence, and speaks so closely to the hearts of the poor that they will listen to no one else — The controversy is at that point Marie does not go to the barn but to please her sister is willing now that Kitty goes to do her best among the children, until she likewise is led away—To Ploverfield? I sound the echoes of the future Oh! is it to be? There could not be a fairer sweeter companion or one who would more perfectly wed with me She tries to make me understand her faults I spell at them like a small boy

happiness with your beloved, which she would rival. And she wishes to feel that my friends are to be hers. The letter will be a charming surprise to her. An assurance also that I am cared for, here and there, and by worthy men. Your wife is sure to love her. If God gives her to me, I may certainly say that our wives will be as much heart in heart as we are. We shall see one another more. Ah ! when you speak of Ploverfield for us during the first sweet days of our union, you touch me deeply and breathe fair auspices. I shall accept, if it can be arranged I could not choose another place while that door stood open My friend, I have written of love and never felt it till now—I have much to pass through in raking up my history with the first woman that held me. But I would pass through fire for my darling, and all that I have to endure seems little for the immense gain I hope to get. When her hand rests in mine, the world seems to hold its breath, and the sun is moveless I take hold of Eternity. I love her.—She is intensely emotional, but without expression for it, save in music. I call her my dumb poet But when she is at the piano, she is not dumb She has a divine touch on the notes —Yes, she is very fond of the boy Not at all in a gushing way, but fond of him as a good little fellow, whom she trusts to make her friend. As to her family . the old man is a good and just old man, who displays the qualities by which he made what fortune he has. There are three sons, four daughters The sons are all in business in France—wool manufacturers, or something. They and the girls were strictly brought up at home at Nonancourt in Normandy. Marie was seventeen when seven years ago they came to England They have been about five years in Mickleham Vale. On Saturday next, Kitty, the third—the one preceding my beloved—is to be married at the little church Marie

take to her I never touched so pure and so conscience clear a heart My own is almost abashed to think itself beloved by such a creature The day when she is to be mine blinds me Will it come ? It flickers like lightning in my brain It will not burn steadily I can't grasp it What does this mean ?—I am troubled but can work —Your loving

GEORGE M

To Captain Maxse

LONDON 1861

MY DEAR MAXSE,—I have told my darling girl that you will come and inspect her on Monday She having a great heart stands prepared and a hope is expressed that you will consent to dine there We will sleep at the Inn or walk home to Esher just as you think fit And how will you arrange to come ? Will you come to Esher in the morning and walk to Mickleham in the afternoon ? In that case she will march to meet us Or will you get out of the train at Guildford and take another that will (see train book) put you down at Dorking or Box hill station In that case we should march to meet you I confess I should like to see you first for I am told by a lady that she would not be considered handsome though she is perfectly charming in manner and in face I tell you this with a rueful drop of the chin and a yearning strain of the eye You are to suppose that I have not called her handsome

Give my dearest regards my thanks my kindest wishes to Mrs Maxse who speaks so tenderly of her and me Write by return post—I am ever your loving

GEORGE MEREDITH

with his fingers upon words of one syllable. Of course some faults exist. But she has a growing mind and a developing nature Love is doing wonders with her—I could write on for hours, but I have letters and work calling loudly stop. We shall live, I fancy, about my present distance from London. But where to find a cottage of the kind I require, is the problem What you say of income is sensible, and has not been unthought of by me If I did not feel courage in my heart and a strong light in my brain, I should not dare to advance in this path, but in those vital points I have full promise I shall now write in a different manner We will speak further on the subject when we meet Let me know what day you think I may select to present you The week after this will exactly do And the Monday or Tuesday of it would be the best days, if possible, or add, the Wednesday Try to give her the whole day, so that you may hear her play in the evening, and see her in all her lights and shades, and know the family—the best specimen of the middle-class that I have ever seen—pure gentlewomen, to call one of whom wife and the rest sisters is a great honour and blessing God bless you, dear fellow. This letter and all the tenderness of my heart is for Mrs Maxse as well as for yourself My kindest wishes for Boy—I am ever your loving

GEORGE MEREDITH

To William Hardman

June 7, 1864.

MY DEAREST TUCK,—She wishes to see Esher, and a friend drives her over to-morrow It has been postponed once or twice . What do you think of her? Is she not worth anything or all in the world? And she likes you so much—thinks, I believe, better of me for having such a friend, and hopes that Mrs Hardman may

the 'Career of the Alabama'¹ He heard of Semmes putting into Cherbourg started reached him, after marvellous difficulties with Port Admirals and gens d armes, on the very eve of his fight with the Kearsage Semmes hailed him with joy he 'wanted some one to whom to confide his papers and was despairing of finding one Gave the papers (journals etc Log) to Adams to do as he pleased with them I have done the first and last chapter—offered to do the whole, but Adams could only wait five days to get the book out so I declined this fiery proximity to the printers devil Adams has been in a dressing gown ever since is blue about the chin as if blown up in a recent naval engagement and has generally the appearance of an elongated Mantalini returned to his wife but legless By the way there is a highly appreciative summary of my literary deeds in a lengthy article in the Westminster Review The New Novel (Vittoria) is going on swimmingly Sandys has heard the first 150 pages and says it is extremely interesting and likely to be by far the best thing I have done Lucas is charmed with the sketch of the Autobiography but owing to certain changes going on in relation to O a W he has not yet sent word for me to start away Thus we are in a little uncertainty Oh Lord ! Tuck hero is my heart swelling and sinking like night waves pressing to a beacon light Oh ! that it were over My compliments to Albrecht with whom I hope to make acquaintance Poco and myself intend to compose an Essay on 'The Occurrences illustrated by the meeting in this world of Albrecht and Tuck

I had intended to walk over to Hampton and see your darlings before writing but this is Wednesday and I shall have no afternoon to myself before Saturday, the day

¹ Probably *The Cruise of the Alabama and the Sumter* (Saunders Otley and Co 1864)

To William Hardman

AT THE SIGN OF 'THE ANGEL,'
MICKLEHAM, July 12, 1864.

BELOVED FAMILY HARDMAN,—And here is Marie writing a race with me by my side! The difficulties have been smoothed; we have indeed plunged through powerful conflicts, and truly like Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, we likewise have passed through fire, and by miracle we bore it and rose from it, fresh, fragrant—did ever man have such a sweet reward? And behold her lashing her dear wits for next word, and pretending, all the while, to be looking at her sister-in-law! She has got it!—No Yes, she is off! Well, Tuck, I trust our fight is nearly over The present design is, that we engage a furnished house for a year, and meantime look about for a house that will suit us. I, your Robin, emboldened by his new and most lovely prospects, have done this. I said to Chapman's, I have done much, will do more. will be in Piccadilly 3 afternoons in the week: will write all your letters anent MSS.: will occasionally, when imperative, see the authors (my name not being given) and so forth: thus, as Tuck sees, becoming a chief person, and at no great cost, and with suitable addition to pay It should be £300. It shall not be less than £250 The matter will be settled in a week. Both Edward and Fredk were glad of the work I had undertaken to do. Don't my Tuck approve? I know that Demitroïa does Indeed the family Hardman does, I know It will be a proper addition to our means, and the economical talk of my blessed Marie is such delicious music! 'Our towels will cost—so much. our sheets—so much, and you mustn't mind its being so dear,' etc Tuck, you talk of wisdom and you talk of poetry. but beat that, if you can! Adams, do you know, is doing

friends will be here Janet and Sir Alec come—and Oh ! I would that the day were over Will it be possible to get a cottage near the New Forest, or in it ? or near Ploverfield, for two weeks until my friend's house is open to us ? I shall come to you in about a week on my way to Normandy, to fetch hither Mario's married sister, who wishes to be present on the great occasion You will see the three together, and what charming creatures they are I am quite fixed in this place, and all are kind The old man is changed and makes the best of the bad business for him He proposes to buy Copsham or any likely spot, and build a house there for us with a portion of the money he settles on Mario Meantime we take a furnished house for six months in or near Kingston You and your wife my friend, will visit us I know that your wife will find a large hearted friend in mine You too will find that your friend is another man I think my work must prosper under such noble influence — Vittoria does not proceed fast but the matter is of a good sort I 've half a mind to bring you half a dozen chapters to read to you My Mario copies them regularly — There's a chance of my getting an under Editorship of a new Review a fellow who is merely to be titular chief acting as head I presume I shall be paid well It is decided in a couple of months More when we meet on this subject I fancy it may be a good thing

When I come to you I must expend a day at Lyndhurst in search for the furnished cottage but could you mean time male inquiries ? I wish it to be tolerably near Ploverfield — How of your health ? You are silent upon that Were I with you a week I would bring you into a better state Now that I am no longer fretted and running twice a day between Mickleham and Copsham, I begin to feel my strength again — Mario says at

you name as the last for Bellagio. More letters, dear old boy !

God bless you both, and keep you jolly !

WE realise your happiness ! Aha ! WE !—Your loving
GEORGE M

To the Rev Augustus Jessopp.

PLOVERFIELD, BURSLEDON,
SOUTHAMPTON, July 1864.

MY DEAR AND GOOD FRIEND !—I know that you are excusing my singular way of treating you.

There will be provision and beds at Copsham on Monday for you and Arthur , a carriage shall be provided to bring you on to Mickleham, my friend Hardman will call for you and take you up. The ceremony will have to be performed early, for Hardman has to make a rush to be in Liverpool at a brother-in-law's marriage the day following

You have perfect faith in me—I feel it I have a new arrangement to settle with Ch & Hall I expect to get the conductorship of a new Magazine : well supported I have laid lines right and left . engaged to do a 1 vol. story within a certain term and in short spread traps for money everywhere . .—Your loving

GEORGE M.

To Captain Marse

MICKLEHAM, DORKING, August 29, 1864

MY DEAR FRED,—I write with my beloved beside me , my thrice darling—of my body, my soul, my song ! I have never loved a woman and felt love grow in me This clear and lovely nature doubles mine And she has humour, my friend She is a charming companion, as well as the staunchest heart and fairest mistress. You will not fail us on our marriage day !—A goodly host of

to whom I bow my head (Shakespeare Goethe, and in their way, Moliere, Cervantes) are Realists au fond But they have the broad arms of Idealism at command They give us Earth but it is earth with an atmosphere One may find as much amusement in a Kaleidoscope as in a merely idealistic writer and just as sound prose is of more worth than pretentious poetry I hold the man who gives a plain wall of fact higher in esteem than one who is constantly shuffling the clouds and dealing with airy delicate sentimentalities, headless and tailless imaginings despising our good, plain strength

Does not all science (the mammoth balloon, to wit) tell us that when we forsake earth we reach up to a frosty inuincible Inane ? For my part I love and cling to earth, as the one piece of God's handiwork which we possess I admit that we can refashion , but of earth must be the material —Yours faithful

GEORGE MEREDITH

To Miss M Hinch

SOUTHAMPTON 1864

MY DEAR BRIDESMAID No 1—I am quite well Are you quite well ? We are quite well —The conjugation being thus concluded I proceed to tell you that we have set our hearts (strike out the s) upon your coming down here Not that we are in need of even you, but we want to show you a picture of perfect felicity and think it will do you good Perhaps we may not mind talking to you but we do not promise that we shall Now, you good friend of my beloved, understand me clearly that we both wish to see you very much and to have you with us when we are at Ploverfield for the reason that you are dear to us in the first place and in the second that we think we can amuse you here and give you pleasant yachting We go to Ploverfield the first week next

my elbow—‘The worst of being at Ploverfield is that Captain Maxse and his wife will be away when we are there.’ This is not to be always the case Adieu. My kind regards (we must sit together and invent new phrases) to Mrs. Maxse. Write, saying whether you can receive me next week—Friday week?—Your loving

GEORGE M.

To the Rev Augustus Jessopp.

Sept 20, 1861

MY DEAR JESSOPP,—As to the Poems I don’t think the age prosaic for not buying them. A man who hopes to be popular, must think from the mass, and as the heart of the mass. If he follows out vagaries of his own brain, he cannot hope for general esteem, and he does smaller work ‘Modern Love’ as a dissection of the sentimental passion of these days, could only be apprehended by the few who would read it many times. I have not looked for it to succeed. Why did I write it?—Who can account for pressure? . . .

Between realism and idealism there is no natural conflict. This completes that Realism is the basis of good composition. It implies study, observation, artistic power, and (in those who can do more) humility. Little writers should be realistic. They would then at least do solid work. They afflict the world because they will attempt that it is given to none but noble workmen to achieve. A great genius must necessarily employ ideal means, for a vast conception cannot be placed bodily before the eye, and remains to be suggested. Idealism is as an atmosphere whose effects of grandeur are wrought out through a series of illusions, that are illusions to the sense within us only when divorced from the groundwork of the real. Need there be exclusion, the one of the other? The artist is incomplete who does this. Men

trust to have a 1 vol novel for January ripe and ready
 Rhoda Fleming, a Plain Story — Your loving

GEORGE M

To William Hardman

PLOVERFIELD BURSLETON
 SOUTHAMPTON Oct 24 1864

MY DEAR LORD ABBOT — You frisk not in your letters to me I pay you due respect, but an you continue this tone of formality by God I will unfrock you ! Know that Marie is the wife of a Pantagruel she is sublime in laughter We sit on a humourous Olympus and rule over the follies of mortals Your letters are seen forsooth ! Your letters oh my father are reverently handled Life here is jolly I rise bathe run and come blooming to breakfast having tied up Sam the vagabond dog who breaks Maxse's heart who in return does his best to break Sam's back I treat the dog differently and being a Celt myself the Irishman comprehends and loves me and won't leave me To day we went out fishing in the boat, and Sam would follow swimming a mile

The house is most pleasant We cannot accustom ourselves to anything smaller And yet Tuck tell me of Thames Cottage for I haven't heard from the faithless Dame Douglas who swore she would write and send agreement Rhoda Fleming is a right excellent story If I compress it into one volume I shall bring it back complete In any case it will be out in the winter

I shall rejoice to see the Hall But my father, in your future letters date them from the Refectory as of yore I give myself seven years and then an I be not a pallid ghost I will fix here my abode By the Nine Gods ! Fancy a salt river crystal clear, winding under full bosomed woods, to a Clovelly like village house

month. It will be a shame to take you from your Aunt. I must confess I should do so without compunction Having taken Marie, I am capable of anything, and if I could discern a really deserving fellow—but Mrs. Smith need not fear they are not too numerous and we have none at hand. We are on the point of going for a sail Marie is at work terminating her letter opposite to me She says that she is happy, and I believe the woman Whither has the philosopher in me fled? Possibly you may have keener eyes Come and use them. You see, I am not afraid of you Do persuade Mrs Smith to part with you for a short term I promise to take every care of my Bridesmaid I beg you to present my most respectful compliments to Mrs Smith and to kiss Evelyn for me mightily Marie shall repay you for the outlay.— I am your most faithful

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To William Hardman

PLOVFRFIELD, BURSLEDON,
SOUTHAMPTON, Oct 12, 1864

MY DEAR LORD ABBOT,—I am working mightily Last night I awoke, and at 3 o'clock struck a light and wrote a poem on Cleopatra for the 'Cornhill,' to suit Sandys's illustration Also an 'Ode' to the Napiers (part of it) and part of 'The Ex-champion's Lament' I say, Young Copperfield! I never had such a fit on me since the age of 21, and my good love, waking too, joyfully assisted by lending notepaper and soothing me for having disturbed her slumber

The air here, the views from the house and proximity to still water make the place glorious and the house is comfortable as could be desired Here would I fix, were it possible! Write, most venerable Father! I really

couldn't give them up and I was compelled to stand before all and make the perfect sacrifice of myself The whole business now presents itself to me as if I had been blown through a tube and landed in Matrimony by Pneumatic Despatch—I am my dear Mrs Waugh your most faithful

GEORGE MEREDITH

To the Rev Augustus Jessopp

PLOVERFIELD BURSLEDON
SOUTHAMPTON Oct 1864

MY DEAR JESSOPP,—Now, on the last evening of my stay here, I write to you, having been intending the thing from the day of my arrival The truth is I write little to you because I love you so well which is a paradox on the surface only When I think of writing my bosom swells to its fullest, and I shrnk in dismay from the thought of emptying it I that write for money money money!—Do you see that? I grasp the pen frenziedly now more I fear from a feeling of duty, or because I m ashamed not to have written We return to Mickleham to morrow To Esher in about a week Marie is a capital wife and my little man will now have a mother—I say! Do you know that you have made an impression on Miss Vulliamy? It s too true As a consequence she will not I think write the review of your vol of Sermons as she once promised I will press it But why are you handsome? and why is your manner charming?—Thus the women pronounce and I m dreading that it will go against the plan I had of getting Miss V to do the Review 'She would not dare O Rev Apollo' to these things should st thou look nor frizz the lock nor modulate the tones For if you carry about the battery it is useless to plead that you shot not neither did you aim

upon house, with ships, and trawlers, and yachts moored under the windows, and away the flat stream, shining to the Southern sun till it reaches Southampton Water, with the New Forest over it, shadowy, and beyond to the left, the Solent and the Island

This is possible from our window

The air makes athletes. All round are rolling woods, or healthy hills. The Roads are hard but one can't have everything I am a man of Bursledon, mark you Adieu ! I must to work The clock 's on 12. I fondle Rhoda for an hour and then retire Out with the lights ! Tell me much news We like to know that the world lives There 's trouble ahead a cook, I cry ! If Nature really abhors a vacuum, she 'll come Once more Adieu
Your loving

GEORGE M.

To Miss Anne Waugh.

PIOVERFIELD, Oct 1864

MY DEAR MRS. WAUGH,—I don't forget the good heart you showed us during our days of trouble and uncertainty. Here is Marie writing to you, and I rise up spontaneously to speak for myself and tell you how happy I am, and what a capital wife I have got I like the women who discerned her when yet undiscovered because I know that such women must be attracted by common sense, simple goodness of heart, and similar if noble qualities, dear to me as well So I take a blunt way of complimenting you, do you see ? We should be glad to hear from you tidings of the student Frank ; and are indeed glad to hear from the valley You heard that the wedding passed like smooth music ? And I had to make a speech, owing to the man who carried my hat —the wretch had basely strung together some neat little illustrations' wherewith to return thanks for the bridesmaids. He

when they are under strong excitement and should most do so Nor are the characters very originally conceived, though there is good matter in the Old Welshman C Rees Your defect at present lies in your raw feeling Time will cure this if you will get the habit of looking resolutely at the thing you would pourtray instead of exclaiming about it and repeating yourself without assisting the reader on in any degree We certainly think that you are a hopeful writer and possibly we have been enough outspoken to encourage you to believe us sincere in saying so

To Miss J—— H——

193 PICCADILLY LONDON W

MADAM — You speak of the exclamatory style as being, you think essentially and naturally feminine If you will look at the works of the writer of *Adam Bede* you will see that she the greatest of female writers manifests nothing of the sort It is simply a quality of youth and you by undertaking to study will soon tame your style Interjections are commonly a sign of raw thought and of vagrant emotion — a literary hysteria to which women may be more subject than men but they can talk in another tongue let us hope We are anxious that you should not be chagrined by any remarks that we have made There is real promise in your work but remember that the best fiction is fruit of a well trained mind If hard study should kill your creative effort it will be no loss to the world or to you And if on the contrary, the genius you possess should survive the process of mental labour it will be enriched and worthy of a good rank But do not be discouraged by what we say and do not listen to the encomiums of friends Read the English of the Essayists read de Stendhal (Henri Beyle)

Forgues, in the 'Revue des deux Mondes,' is translating 'Emilia.'

A publisher with whom I have an appointment this week proposes to give me four figures (with no dot between) for a novel. Am I rising? The market speaks!

I have, during the last month of my stay here, written 250 pages of 'A plain Story' of 600 pages (2 vols). 'Vittoria' lags: but will be good, I see. I have had to resist awful temptation in the matter of verse and succumbed once or twice. Smith (of the 'Cornhill') while 'personally admiring "Martin's Puzzle," is compelled to say he thinks it would offend many of his readers, and must therefore beg to, etc' The 'Cleopatra' to Sandys's illustration is done 'Lines' merely! Not of much value, but containing fire as well as wind.—When shall we meet?—I shall be a MILLIONAIRE next year My 'plain story' is first to right me and then the 3 voulmer will play trumpets Write to me—perhaps the Garrick Club is the best address for two or three weeks about Wednesday and Friday time Give my love to your wife, whose dear hearty face I long to see Will you, will you, will you come to us at Christmas?—Adieu Here I am, and could go on now almost to the verge of the soup, beyond the dinner bell

Take my heart and my name at the bottom of it

GEORGE MEREDITH

To Miss J——H——

193 PICCADILLY, LONDON, W, Nov 22, 1864.

The chief fault in your stories is the redundancy of words which overlays them; and the chief hope visible in them is the copious youthful feeling running throughout. Your characters do not speak the language of nature, and this is specially to be charged against them

books have no chance with Chapman & Hall—and Oh the Catullus! Which is in another box and which I want to put my hand to before you print it

Have you heard that the Countess Guiccioli has two continuation cantos of Don Juan and means to publish them? Likewise more of Byron!—He's abused so I take to him and I'm a little sick of Tennysonian green Tea I don't think Byron wholesome—exactly but a drop or so—Eh? And he doesn't give limp lacl a daisical fishermen and pander to the depraved sentimentalism of our drawing rooms I tell you that 'Enoch Arden' is ill done and that in twenty years time it will be denounced as villainous weak, in spite of the fine (but too conscious) verse and the rich insertions of tropical scenery Now, then!—are we face to face, foot to foot?—Forgues is translating 'Emilia' (somewhat condensed) very well in the *Revue des deux Mondes*'

To Captain Maxse

GARRICK CLUB Jan. 14 1865

MY DEAR FRED,— It was my intention to write the Verses at Ploverfield I will write and send them—that is if you agree with my view

Verses, because they fix a child's memory and remain with him, and become a part of his child's understanding of reverence perforce of the music, and necessitate simplicity of expression

I hold to the word 'Father' No young child can take the meaning of 'Spirit' You must give him a concrete form or he will not put an idea in what he is uttering He must address some body Later, when he throws off his childishness he will, if you are watching and assisting him learn to see that he has prayed to no

in French ; Heinrich Zschokke in German (minor tales). Learn to destroy your literary offspring remorselessly until you produce one that satisfies your artistic feeling.

To William Hardman.

MICKLEHAM, Dec. 18, 1864

BELOVED TUCK,—The Christmas season causes that contemplation should make you specially its object. Marie went in the afternoon for a second edition of the Reverend B—— . . . I aloft, to Mickleham Downs, where the great herded yews stand on a pure snowfield I thought to have fallen on the very throne of Silence. In a few paces I became a Druid. Time withered from the ends and all his late writings were smudged out, till I lived but in the earlier days of Britain, when he with difficulty made his mark It was a sublime scene, that long roll of the unfooted snow, with the funeral black plumes of the yews spreading in a dumb air, as if all had ceased, or nothing was begun Embraced by it, my spirit conjured up a passionate desire to snowball Tuck, till he cried himself a sinner. I moaned that the man was not there, that I might snowball him, till fainting he dropped to earth

Eh ! What a change of the course of our fortunes, Tuck ! I am married, and thou Lord of Norbiton, and all these things were dreamed not a year back Wherefore must I think truly there is a Spirit and a peculiar Spirit, to the new year, and I greet you and wish well to you and yours (who also are mine) in the year to come.

To the Rev. Augustus Jessopp.

GARRICK CLUB, Autumn 1864 (?).

MY DEAR JESSOPP,— . The 'Fine Arts' and 'Laurence Sterne' await you, just unpacked Classical

work than she deserves I wrote in saddest spirits, rare with me Stomach, my friend I am not in the bracing air which befits me But, in future I will be punctual By degrees I will reduce the portentous O U s And I thank you with all my heart for the friendly peace breathing letter It s precious balm to read — Vittoria is one third towards completion Did you see the translation of 'Emilia' by Forgues condensed, in the 'Revue des Deux Mondes' ? He has apparently taken to me he sent for Rd Feverel to review A New Edition of 'Shagpat, with an illustration to Bhanavar by Sandys comes out in a month — Marie has I believe written fully anent the Son We mourn and howl over him— When are we four to meet again ? You see there is a new witch now, and she s a darling — Adieu, for a space ! — I am your loving

GEORGE MEREDITH

To William Hardman

April 19 1865

DEAR SIR — Am I to be damned to all eternity because I curse at a vile organ now afflicting me with the tune of Jack Robinson presently to be followed by the 100th Psalm and the simulation of the groans of a sinner

Perhaps you will put this before your reverend friend But are you not to be damned in the present for permitting the infliction and not at least commanding a fresh importation of organs into Kingston, and the exit of the old

This is a matter for you to reflect upon — I am dear sir even as a Chestnut on the Hob your bursting

AUTHOR

false impersonation in addressing an invisible 'Father.' If you do otherwise than this you are in danger (as I think) of feeding his mouth with empty words.

Of Creed not a syllable

Now let me ask you for a piece of advice. Marie and I, following your example, are abjuring (we follow it tentatively) alcoholic liquor. We find the water dreadfully cold, though one pledges Purcell ! and the other Fred ! We suppose that we shall get used to it, as you and your Water-God have done. But now our water-pipes are frozen. We have nothing to drink Please what are we to do ? Answer before we choke.—Ever your loving

GEORGE MEREDITH

To the Rev. Augustus Jessopp.

THE CEDARS, Jan 30, night, 1865

No, my dear Jessopp : for this there is no necessity. But, hear ! the man went and got married · it was well for him : he bought linen, he bought plate, disbursed early and eke late . the fat end of his purse did set flowing towards his fireside, and the lean was to them that did accredit him. So. And meantime, in prospect of the needful, he put aside 'Vittoria' (which contains points of grandeur and epical interest) to 'finish off' Rhoda Fleming in one volume, now swollen to two—and Oh, will it be three ?—But this is my D^d D^d D^d uncertain workmanship. You see, I am three days in town, and I am hustled with moving and can't get my shoulders into a place, but the toe of Fate takes me somewhat lower and away I go , and this is not favourable to composition, though my dear wife does all that she can for me, and would hush the elements, bidding them know me pen in hand However, I hope in six weeks to be clear of Miss Rhoda, into whose history I have put more

Wahlverwandtschaften—would delight you as they have nourished Hawthorne—I wish I were going to meet you at Lord Hardwicke's I like my Lord—I am very hot upon *Vittoria*' Lewes says it must be a success and it has my best writing I fancy I begin in the 'Fortnightly' in February Perhaps I have given it too historical a character to please the brooding mind of Fred But we shall see I think one must almost love Italy to care for it and the heroine There are scenes that will hold you much adventure to entertain you delicate bits and fiery handling But there is no tender dissection and the softer emotions are not kept at half gasp upon slowly moving telescopic objects with their hearts seen beating in their frames—Marie thanks you warmly for the monograms which are doubtless very pretty jugglery and show how one M can stand on the head of another and have W interlacing his legs—like a basketful of lampreys—Give my love to the boys and make Freddy remember me I kiss your Cecilia's fingers and am ever your loving friend

GEORGE MEREDITH

To Captain Maxse

MICKLEHAM 1865

MY DEAR FRED—It will annoy and astound you to hear that I consider Bixio brave and constant though I question whether much is gained by any individual action before there is cause for general discontent Merely to deny, is not to show a love for truth It shows fanaticism—which is evidently what delights you so much The fanatical worship of truth will always be fruitless it is nothing better than the embracing of a phantom For what is Truth? Bixio could state nothing He fires a sounding shot while there is peace and against a superstition which in the present day

To Captain Maxse

Kingston, 1865

MY DEAR FRED,—Great thanks for the game decorating our larder —Miss Longworth¹ has something to complain of, and I think Dr Hunter² an effronté Yankee But surely you admit that British Juries are commonly sentimental to an infinite degree in favour of the protesting female? The late verdicts are merely a reaction —I must tell you that I am becoming an admirer of President Johnson And have you seen the Book called Sherman's great March? If you get it, examine the heads of his Generals They are of a peculiarly fine cast and show the qualities of energy and skill, and also race They are by no means vulgar Place our best men (headed by the Duke of Cam) alongside them, and start The contrast will not be flattering to us —Hawthorne has just the pen to fascinate you His deliberate analysis, his undramatic representations, the sentience rather than the drawings which he gives you of his characters, and the luscious, morbid tone, are all effective But I think his delineations untrue. their power lies in the intensity of his egotistical perceptions, and are not the perfect view of men and women —Goethe's elective Affinities—the

¹ Maria Theresa Longworth (1832-1881), authoress, and plaintiff in the Yelverton case. In the summer of 1852 she was introduced to William Charles Yelverton, afterwards Viscount Avonmore. In 1855 she accepted his proposal of marriage, and though the engagement was for a time suspended, on April 12, 1857 Yelverton read aloud the Anglican marriage service at Miss Longworth's lodgings in Edinburgh, and they were afterwards married at the Roman Catholic chapel at Rostrevor in Ireland, and lived together both in Ireland and Scotland. On June 26, 1858, Yelverton formally married the widow of Professor Edward Forbes, and on October 31, 1859 Miss Longworth sued him for restitution of conjugal rights. She failed to win her case then, and though the Irish court upheld her, the Scottish and English courts declared against her.

² Dr Robert Hunter, who brought an action for libel against the *Pall Mall Gazette*, Nov 10, 1865. He won his case damages one farthing

cannot think that men's minds are strong enough, or their sense of virtue secure, to escape from the tutelago of superstition in one form or another, just yet From the Pagan divinity to the Christian, I see an advanced conception, and the nearer we get to a general belief in the abstract Deity—¹ e the more and more abstract the nearer are men to a comprehension of the principles (morality, virtue etc) than which we require nothing further to govern us—I write expecting dinner bell—As regards Hawthorne little Meredith admits that your strokes have truth I strive by study of humanity to represent it not its morbid action I have a tendency to do that, which I repress for, in delineating it there is no gain In all my, truly very faulty works there is this aim Much of my strength lies in painting morbid emotion and exceptional positions, but my conscience will not let me so waste my time Hitherto consequently I have done nothing of mark But I shall and 'Vittoria' will be the first indication (if not fruit) of it My love is for epic subjects—not for cobwebs in a putrid corner though I know the fascination of unravelling them Vittoria begins in the Fortnightly on February 1st if not Jany 15th

To Captain Maxse

KINGSTON Friday 1865

MY DEAR FRED—I look over your recent letters (your pertinacious defence of your untenable position and ingenuous affectation of a triumph being amusing to me) and find questions I have not answered

A man named Greenwood newly eltd to the Garrick, is the Editor of Pall Mall —The bar of Michael Angelo ¹ has puzzled hundreds I can't attempt to explain it

¹ Cf *In Memoriam*

rather averts intolerance than invokes it. What I venture to say is, Live on and be placable under some trifling irritation, till men are near a majority (or nearer to one) in contempt of imposture ; or till the apprehension of priests prompt them to commence their old game. At that hour is time enough for us to think of action. A tyro in conspiracy will tell you that these isolated protests never exist. Some (miserable philosophers) have said that they owe their origin to vanity. I am not quite of that opinion. It is worthy of your school to rush at once on a presumption that, as I differ from you, I must be a time-server. The Faggot-and-Torture priests said likewise—‘If not for, against us.’ You appear to me to want to raise up an extreme party that shall rouse the other party to extremes, and so do battle-fight for a shade ; gain what Time would have given you without waste of blood, temper, and divine meditation. Between you Philosophy would have no home on our planet. You presume moreover to declare yourself as if, perceiving a system to be faulty, it was an imperative duty to explode every shred of it to the winds. You must bear in mind that Christianity will always be one of the great chapters in the History of Humanity : that it fought down brutishness : that it has been the mother of our civilization : that it is tender to the poor, maternal to the suffering, and has supplied for most, still supplies for many, nourishment that in a certain state of the intelligence is instinctively demanded. St. Bernard checked Abelard, it is true. But he also stood against the French Barons, rebuked and controlled them. The Church was then a Light. Since it did such a service to men, men I think should not stand out against it without provocation.—You speak, my dear Fred, of ‘the deepest questions of life.’ They are to be thought over very long and very carefully before they are fought over I

of successive protests in favour of Truth when those protests are not directed by wisdom Will bawlings in the street avail save to disturb and annoy the lieges? They irritate the slumbering dominant party without strengthening the insurgent What is being done in the Fortnightly for instance, and elsewhere, is efficacious and does strengthen while it increases the silent band Let Philosophy sap the structure and work its way What we have to anticipate is this There is, and will further be, a falling off of the educated young men in seeking an establishment as Churchmen These are highly educated, and in their nature tolerant They are beginning to think for themselves and they give their lives to other matters The Church will have to be recruited from a lower a more illiterate necessarily a more intolerant class These will find themselves at variance with their intellectual superiors and in self defence will attempt to wield the Dogma and knock us down with a club In about twenty years time we may expect a conflict to come If in the meantime we alarm such placid fellows as we see in the clerical robes we are really doing Truth no service Objectless (that is indistinct blind) protests are like all unseasonable things useless and are shelved as mother nature shovels away the dust which does not serve her Let Bixio do as pleases him I don't complain I say that he is not an example—except for a constitutional rebel and he is a curiosity and will never get followers

In reading Carlyle bear in mind that he is a humourist The insolence offensive to you is part of his humour He means what he says, but only as far as a humourist can mean what he says See the difference between him and Emerson who is on the contrary a philosopher The humourist notwithstanding has much truth to back him Swim on his pages take his poetry and fine

I have been foolish enough to think that it must mean a peculiar girder-like hanging brow that one sees on Buonarotti's face. Great poets attain a superior lustre by these obscurities. If I had written such a line, what vehement reprobation of me from Ploverfield! what cunning efforts to construe! and finally what a lecture on my wilfulness! In Tennyson it is interesting. In Browning you are accustomed to gnaw a bone and would be surprised to find him simple. But G. M. who is not known, not acknowledged, he shall be trounced if he offers us a difficulty—we insist upon his thinking in our style. Very well, Fred. I am used to it—No, I hate the black East, and I don't like the frost; I like nothing in Kingston. But I envy you the fine S. W. now showing soft white and blue, and taking you in its arms. Adieu; mark two or three points (a few will serve) in my advice to you from time to time, and note and communicate your sensations when at last you appreciate and adopt them—for scientific purposes, not for my satisfaction at all—Ever your friend,

GEORGE M.

To Captain Maxse.

1865.

*In re Bixio.*¹

DEAREST FRED,—There is no such thing as a sum

¹ Girolamo Nino Bixio, born at Chiavari near Genoa in 1821. He enlisted in the Sardinian marine service soon after 1835, and remained in it till 1846. In 1848 he shared in the revolutionary excitement, enrolled himself as a volunteer, and took part in the defence of Vicenza and of Venice. In the following year he was severely wounded in the defence of Rome. After rendering other services under Garibaldi to the cause of Italian Liberation, he took command of the vessels in the expedition of 1860, and at Marsala led one of the battalions of volunteers. He was the second of 'the Thousand'. He held chief command in the battle on the Volturno, and there defeated the Neapolitan troops in their attempt to surround Garibaldi. At the close of the war he entered the Italian army. He died in 1873 in the East Indies.

barbaric system of teaching men to be humane, and is of the same class as Freemasonry, in which you bind yourself to help a man because he knows how to press your knuckles in a particular manner I can't bear asking men to do this but I do wish the boy to have some little link with you, such as your name will give him

We differ in our spirit of objection to the dominant creed but I suppose that twenty years hence we shall not differ When the Ministers of Religion press on for an open rupture by attempts at persecution it will be time to take rank under colours until when I hold myself in reserve I don't want the day to be advanced I think you altogether too impetuous 500 years too fast for the human race I think that where the Christian Ministers are guilty of little more than boredom you have got them in a state of perfection, and at least owe them your tolerance for theirs —And so I shall continue to think until next I go to Church Adieu

To G H Lewes¹

KINGSTON LODGE Dec 9 1865

MY DEAR LEWES—I shall be glad to make over to you the use of the copyright of my novel *Vittoria* for issue in the 'Fortnightly Review, in consideration of the sum of £250 all subsequent rights to the use of it being reserved by myself Your saying write to me did not seem to imply write immediately or there will be no contract In fact I supposed you were careless about any stipulation until more of my work had been submitted to you I am hard at it and as carefully as possible Pardon me if my apparent negligence shall have put you out I thank you very much for your fore

¹ The friend of George Eliot then editing the *Fortnightly Review*

grisly laughter, his manliness, together with some splendid teaching. It is a good set-off to the doctrines of what is called the 'Empirical school.' I don't agree with Carlyle a bit, but I do enjoy him.

You should read Lewes's article on Comte in the 'Fortnightly' before this —also Garrison's on 'Co-operative labour.'

Tell me what you think of 'Vittoria.' Lewes is enamoured of her. I know the workmanship is good. Further I am unable to judge.

As regards Gilmore's house, I should like to take it. But I have determined to save up and put by, and endure this place (if possible) for the three years' term. And when I move I will move to a fixed place. Rich men may be houseless rovers · it upsets poor ones. Besides, wives don't like foreign houses and won't let their hearts' fibres cling to any place not their own—don't you know that?

Willie Maxse is the sweetest blooming little man in all the world—(Yes, Mrs Fred, in all the world!) His ready smile is lovely. He develops splendidly, and on mere mother's milk. Yet, though he is flourishing so well and acts like clockwork, we have a throng of people saying, 'Oh! he must be fed by hand as well: no mother can stand it, no child can thrive, etc'; and their own children, thus according to their system, bottle and biscuit fed, wheeze and cough and wake of nights and have convulsions—God knows what. With such parents we may expect fools at least in the next generation.

I trust the two dear lads will go on well. Salute Freddy from me —Your affectionate

GEORGE M

To Captain Maxse.

GARRICK CLUB, 1865

MY DEAREST FRED,—Let him be your lay godson. As regards the ceremony, it is a piece of the old secondary

mination which you hinted that you would by and by abstain from clothing yourself will not I trust be carried into effect It would please none but Monboddo's ghost I have in fact said that we wear too much clothing—still Fred, it is surely an excess to forswear a single garment, and rely upon hair to cover your body, as you look to impudence to protect your shivering arguments!

I long intensely to see you and walk with you and I shall correct you very gently Don't forget that mental arrogance is as a fiery wine to the spirit—a little of it gives a proper pride but you carry too much Adieu I bow to your Cecilia and am your loving GEORGE M

To Captain Maxse

KINGSTON LODGE April 25 midnight 1866

MY DEAREST FRED— The article on the *Tra vailleurs de la Mer* is Morley's I think it scarcely does justice to the miraculous descriptive power The Storm is amazing I have never read anything like it It is next to Nature in force and vividness Hugo rolls the sea and sweeps the heavens the elements are in his hands He is the largest son of his mother earth in this time present Magnificent in conception unsurpassed— leagues beyond us all—in execution Not (nur Schade !) a philosopher There's the pity With a philosophic brain as well as his marvellous poetic energy, he would stand in the front rank of glorious men forever

His occasionally dirty speech is just a part of his grotesque greatness It costs me nothing to overlook it—especially in this age of satin

Fryston is the dullest house with the dryest company in the dismallest country I have ever visited Houghton of course was pleasant but I think I could never travel two miles to go there again

going letter, which quite solves my difficulty, and settles the matter justly—If my progress seems to you slow, remember that I am on foreign ground and have to walk warily I read a good deal of the novel to Mdme Venturi the other day, who says that the Italian colouring is correct.

To Captain Maxse.

KINGSTON LODGE,
KINGSTON-ON-THAMES, S W , Jan 8, 1866

MY DEAR FRED,—We have returned, and if this S W. holds, I shall rejoice to see Ploversfield on Saturday. But if it freezes again ? Well, you shall write and command I want to come—I certainly think that prayer is good for children It is good even after the period when blind reverence ceases to be fruitful—it is good for men It is at once an acknowledgment of some higher power · it rouses up and cleanses the nature, and searches us through to find what we are. Only, the praying for gifts, and thanking for gifts, is really damnable It 's like treating the Lord as an old uncle A child should pray in verse—don't you think so ? I have thought of trying to write a morning and evening song for Freddy. Say if you care to have them. Arthur used to repeat some lines

Oh ! I quite acknowledge that I am conquered by you. But then, I never attempted to get the better of you The more you flourish the prouder I am of my work, and if you prefer to give your gratitude in due form to a medical man, I don't complain , you choose the least humiliating alternative, as you may think There was a report in London yesterday that you had given up Meat I hope this is not true, though I know I used to tell you that we consume too much meat, and you (I remember) appeared to reflect on my words The deter-

as well, don't regard me as a political writer, so I am always in danger of slipping into the waste paper basket, unless I write review or essay They rely on a sufficient number of handy men to supply the wants of their journals And the truth is, I can only now and then afford time to write an experimental article on politics When my last debts are paid, and I have finished my next novel, I shall have a free hand I'm sure you don't suppose that I willingly abandon you to your fight I could have no wish but to stick by you, and the more so as your views are mine

Moreover Editors object to articles upon subjects which are not immediately prominent I tried the 'Pall Mall' with your pamphlet but Greenwood was in different in tone The subject will revive speedily but the moment it lay down it was temporarily dead for Editors—I have not meant to say I will not write unless I see my pay—but that it's heart breaking to feel that I have given up my time with some amount of ardour in a theme all to no purpose save to see my manuscript as the froth tossed up from the wheel of an Editorial mill—But surely even though you should feel some disappointment with me you accuse my circumstances more than me—Adieu Your sketch of the Grebe¹ flying to Havre drives me mad I hope Mrs Fred will enjoy the week at Ascot and have the long blooming holiday thoroughly due to her—Your loving

GEORGE MEREDITH

To Miss J—— H——

193 PICCADILLY
LONDON W June 15 1866

The Reader of Miss J—— H——'s tale of Anwyl Anwyl presents his compliments to her, feeling pro

¹ Captain Maxse's cutter yacht

... Have the articles in the 'Pall Mall G.' on coal and England's prosperity made you a trifle uncomfortable?

Gladstone's behaviour has been wretched

Doubtless a combative Berkeley would have supported him in spite of conscience. I can hear you making a short speech in condemnation of the Government while you promise to record your vote in its favour. Next to fighting the world, fighting oneself is the prime luxury; and to put yourself in such a position that you will have to do the latter, because you have done the former, is genius. It must be an intense grief to you to be out of Parliament now—I take no interest in Reform. I see no desire for it below. If there were, I would give it; I have no fear of Radicals. Democracy must come, and the sooner it overflows rulers who are cowardly, the better for all. We say—Democracy, as if it were some deadly evil, whereas it is almost synonymous with Change. Democracy never rests. The worst of it is that it can be violent in its motion. To you, who prefer the Allopathic system of medicine, it will come as a natural matter. Good-night, dear Friend. Write to me, and often.

To Captain Maxse

MICKLEMHAM, June 8, 1866

MY DEAR FRED,—Don't think I desert you. The truth is, that to write politics satisfactorily, one must give up one's time to the study of politics—one must be in the thick of the fight. And only in such cases can you exact from Editors a proper respect for you. You must prove that your political opinions are worth having in type, or be so useful to them that they can't refuse to insert them. Now Greenwood, and doubtless our B.

month (See *Correspondence from the Seat of War in Italy* Memorial Edition and *Édition de Luxe* of the works of George Meredith)

To Tom Taylor ¹

MILAN Sept 10 1866

MY DEAREST TOM,—Bird had left for Ischl when your letter reached me in Vienna I write in case you should see Mowbray Morris and have favourable news to communicate to say that my address will be for the next six weeks aux soins de M Theodore Vulliamy, à Nonan court (Eure), France

I came over the Semmering to Venice remained there three days and worked my way through Padua and Vicenza hitherwards, where from the upper windows of the Hotel Cavour I see the White Alps Italy is where I would live if I had the choice Here I am so happy that I only want my wife and little ones with me to wish for nothing further In all probability I shall be back in Venice for the fetes if the delay is not great The Mg Post should have an account of them Perhaps Borthwick will insist on my doing the work and I shall not be sorry for what a correspondent wants is something to describe and not to continue writing about nothing

Do you remember the Carpaccios in Venice? Surely justice is not done to his extraordinary sweetness and richness If I did not love Giorgione and Titian so much I should rank him my favourite His faces are as sweet as Fra Angelico's with variety and humanity superadded The Baptism of Christ in the Church of San Lorenzo Vicenza by Giov Bellini is the only Christian head of

¹ Tom Taylor (T T of Meredith's *To a Friend Lost*) editor of *Punch* who wrote the famous lines on the death of Lincoln (April 14 1865) You lay a wreath on murdered Lincoln's bier for which he received the thanks of Congress

foundly guilty—for the blame of this long delay rests entirely upon him. He put the MS aside, after he had read it, his intention was to write a long chapter on what to write, blot and avoid. He can say in personal extenuation that Miss H—— could not possibly have made any ‘commercial’ use of the tale, and that if she had published it, it would have done harm to her reputation

The Reader is in town on Thursday next, and, if it shall please Miss H—— to listen to a few of his critical objections to her style, perhaps he may be enabled to do her more good in that direction than if he attempted to write them down. Therefore, should she be willing to call at 193 Piccadilly on Thursday at four P M, he will endeavour penitently to repair his shameful behaviour. The truth is, he did nothing at all, because of his having intended to do so much

If Miss H—— should prefer to avoid vocal criticism it shall be written down, but it will possibly not be so effective, and it may seem more severe

In making this proposal, the Reader has taken an unusual course by which he trusts to be able to show his desire to expiate his previous carelessness. It needs hardly to be said that obscurity is his most comfortable cloak, whenever he undertakes the thankless duty of looking at a MS.

In June 1866 Meredith went, on behalf of the *Morning Post*, to the seat of war in Italy. On June 22 he was at Ferrara with Cialdini’s army corps—at Cremona on the 30th—at Bozzolo, the headquarters of the eleventh division of the Italian army, on July 3—at the headquarters of the army on July 7 at Torre Malumberti—thence he moved to the new headquarters at Piadena and on to Treviso. He left Italy and reached Marseilles, after a voyage of thirty-six hours, on July 24. He returned to Italy in the following

promise of the essay on Byron makes me extremely curious for though I don't mistrust your estimation of the manliness of his verse, he is the last man of whom I would venture to foretell your opinion—As to the Poems—if they are not yet in the press, do be careful of getting your reputation firmly grounded for I have heard low mutterings already from the Lion of British prudery, and I who love your verse, would play savagely with a knife among the proofs for the sake of your fame, and because I want to see you take the first place as you may if you will—Apropos what do you think of Buchanan's poetry? Lewes sends him up I don't know how high My feeling is that he is always on the strain for pathos and would be a poetic Dickens But I can't judge him fairly I have not read his book Adieu Remind Moxon of the Byron, and write to me again—I am ever your faithful GEORGE MEREDITH

To Captain Maxse

KINGSTON ON THAMES S W 1866

MY DEAREST FRED,—I was too late for the post yesterday but you know how such good news will have gladdened me

Our Willie Maxse is quite charming, he is healthy and spirited, and very intelligent You should see his face when he is laughed at His sense of humour, with a momentary disgust at finding himself the mark for it in others produces the most comical expression possible Marie says she can understand some delight in welcoming a boy but a girl! who would care for a girl!

The system by which you are correcting your troubled physical condition is I am sure, sound To a strong stomach occasional draughts of wine do good rather

the Saviour that I have ever seen. I dare say you know it Curious to see the ebbing of the Austrians out of all this district! I have sent the 'Post' some letters, but I must reduce my impressions to an article

I hope very much that the 'Times' will take me on In a settled position (I wish it were in Italy), and with command of news, or the sources of it, I believe I should show the requisite judgment. Adieu, my dear Tom If there is anything I can do for you in North Italy, write immediately to the 'Hotel Cavour, Milan.' If you won't like 'Vittoria' (pure obstinacy or base siding with the majority) I promise you quite another sort of next novel. Kiss your little girl for me and give her a stranger's love, and God bless you all.—I am your affectionate

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Algernon Charles Swinburne.

KINGSTON LODGE, KINGSTON-ON-THAMES

MY DEAR SWINBURNE,—'Vittoria,' as I am told by Chapman and others, is not liked, so you may guess what pleasure your letter has given me For I have the feeling that if I get your praise, I hit the mark. It seems that I am never to touch the public's purse Why will you content yourself with only writing generously? Why will you not come and see me? My wife has constantly asked me how it is that you do not come. Must I make confession to her that I have offended you? It is difficult for me to arrange for spare evenings in town, I can't leave her here alone If we meet, I must quit you only too early I wonder whether Sandys would invite us to dine with him; when we might have one of our evenings together, and come to an understanding, about future evenings at Kingston I will speak to him on that head—I am very eager for the poems. The

fluity of red pepper Still, I don't like to see all the English Press down on him, for he's a boy, and isn't it rather hard to break him for writing insolent letters to an MP? Wouldn't it be sufficient to degrade him in rank as he is already in reputation?—But when our Press is unanimous, I am always against it Our Press was unanimous in favour of Lieutenant P— till he showed too unmistakeably as a low dog—Borthwick starts to day for Marseilles thence with Sir Henry

to Malta to Tunis, to Spezzia to Rome to Nice —et vogue les papillons!—Adieu dear friend, I don't like to leave off talking to you—Your ever loving

GEORGE M

To Captain Maxse

THE OLD HOUSE MICKLEHAM
DORKING Dec 22 1866

MY DEAR FRED—I cannot accept the illustration of the mackerel It is ingenious and no more though it may be praised for throwing a side light on the mental characteristics of the discoverer If you had always turned sick at the smell of wine to force you to drink any wine would be cruel and wrong If half a mackerel were daily plumped down the throat of a man who had never in his life taken 10 lb of mackerel per diem it would be monstrous to subject him to the meal But if he has eaten much mackerel—too much—there is (supposing virtues to exist in mackerel as in wine) no harm in asking him to take a little from time to time I for instance should say to him— The 10 lb a day were a poison to you but that is no reason why the occasional half mackerel should be the same You fancy it because one excess begets the conception of another you have become the victim of a kind of mental elephantiasis—you fancy all things as immen

than harm Our fault is to eat in excess while we drink wine as well One dish and one pint of wine, old and sound, go harmoniously, but wine should be treated as a luxury—I agree with your practical deductions, at the same time, I note with dismay your tendency to extremes You are right just now. Nevertheless you must needs lay down positive principles as if your existing state were the key of things. You will become a fanatical Retired Admiral advocating Maine Liquor laws for every natural appetite on earth, and dogmatically refusing to hear an opinion. I foresee it,—unless you can be humble while there's yet time, and admit that I am right, who preach moderation, and you are wrong, who raise the banner of Abstinence with all its tissue in tatters—I dare say you will continue to deny that it was I who gave you the good advice months—years back And then probably when we are old men you will consent to my saying it was I who did it Dogmatism confounded in the last crisis escapes by a quibble ! How much better to take a manly, modest view of a friend's deserts —I do congratulate you with all my heart on your prospect of recovery, which I think clear. Only, I am amused at the physiological lecture Why, I have said as much a hundred times ! But you now turn round, and with supernatural force hurl my own wisdom at me, and say, Read that ! Surely the argumentative virus was never more wonderfully displayed If the trick is old, it is at any rate uncommonly well managed and no doubt almost unconsciously Confess to my value in one bright instance, and even you would hardly be able to stand against me in other matters, so, to maintain your antagonism, you affect an air of total independence Such tactics will serve you well in the House of Commons —What do you think of Lieutenant B—— ? He seems to be the victim of a poor education and a super-

N B—I confess I have written without consideration as to whether it is kind to knock over the theories by which you assure yourself that your wildest changes of system are sound and admirable On my honour I am careless about gratitude, though the sight of ingratitude naturally pains

To Captain Maxse

Kingston Jan 17 1867

MY DEAR FRED—Pardon me—just one moment, you see, I turn to you from my worl and give you a sheet that should have formed part of my magnum opus ice water is not wholesome Farmers will not give frozen water to their cattle and melted ice to be drink able must be clean—a thing difficult to obtain But when taken it should be as all civilized people will tell you, partly in solution Ice, but not ice water, is a specific for indigestion though one to be rarely used Compelled to set you right !

I think that you take a philosophically false estimate of a child's intelligence and nature He retains what he learns just as much and no more than he remains what he is Certain mental and physical food is necessary for him Beware of training him to scepticism ! I can't bear to think of a boy as being educated in opposition to the opinion prevailing—The title Father really does not suggest the aspect of a man to a child's imagnation if you associate it with prayer to an Uhseen One Neither does the jingle of Nursery Rhymes destroy his sense for the pure flow of good verse The prayer you sketch is not objectionable but it is not enough to my mind I will in a few days send you a version I would not say God but Father of all Good The title God is bestowed by a child (in obedience to the

sities ; you cannot understand the value of an intermediate measure I warned you again and again that 10 lb of mackerel per diem was excessive, etc., but mackerel is nourishing Really, Fred, I have driven you hard to make you fall back on the mackerel argument—Mackerel is poison to some, ergo, wine, which is likewise poison to some, should be similarly avoided But I tell you that Mackerel, if hurtful to any constitution, shows itself noxious from the first and won't be taken. And if wine is really bad for you, a glass would originally have inspired you with all the wisdom you insist on having gained for yourself in contempt of your best advisers now. On the contrary, wine has never poisoned you, but a wilful resolve to take as much as you pleased of it (do you remember Cherbourg, where you would, despite an agony of protestation from me, order and drink a bottle of Burgundy at a third-rate Norman provincial hotel)—that has done the work of poisoning your health At this festive season, my dear Fred, one reflects on your fearful relapse from clear and eminent sense, with a melancholy deeper than wrath. I know what is coming next I have anticipated it and written it down. I will mention it another time.

What I dread most is that you are by these still degrees, as it were, boiling, or simmering, yourself down to a sort of human type, and engine When you think you think suddenly, vehemently—with the force and swiftness of a meteor, and perhaps with the result, but in any case your apparent incapacity to listen to the wisdom thrust in your way, is fraught with incalculable evils, and more and more I feel Fred going and an eccentric Force usurping his place I will allude to this further by and by Do you feel for the Pope yet ? The Holy Father is, unfortunately situated, surely.—I am ever yours,

GEORGE M.

done in verse As for the hubbub, it will do you no harm and you have partly deserved it and it has done the critical world good by making men look boldly at the restrictions imposed upon art by our dominating damnable bourgeoisie — Vittoria passes to the limbo where the rest of my works repose You alone have hit on the episode of the Guidascarpi I have not heard or seen another mention of it I would have carried it into fulness but the vast machinery pressed on me My object was not to write the Epic of the Revolt—for that the time is yet too new but to represent the revolt itself with the passions animating both sides, the revival of the fervid Italian blood and the character of the people Luigi Suracco Barto Rizzo etc Agostino Balderini is pur posesly made sententious and humourously conscious of it Carlo Ammiani is the personification of the youth of Italy of the nobler sort Laura Piavent and Violetta d Isorella are existing contrasts —I am afraid it must bo true that the style is stiff but a less condensed would not have compassed the great amount of matter —I see the illustrious Hutton of the Spectator laughs insanely at my futile effort to produce an impression on his public I suppose I shall have to give up and tal e to journalism as I am now partly doing —Yes ! if you could get a place to say something of Vittoria ! Morley stated your suggestions to me and appeared willing that it should be done in the 'Fortnightly if your or some such good name fathered the article But his opinion is that it should be a general review of me the writer could dwell on the work pleasing him best There is some doubt about giving a special review of a novel that has appeared in the Fortnightly pages Adieu my friend I beg you to write to me, as I have requested Arthur is away by this time in Berne What is the address of Sandys ? I do not see him at the Garrick —I want you to bring

inquiries he has made) on him who rolls the thunder and sends the currants that form the pudding. He may always retain this notion. I am sure your excellent Mrs Lewis does, perhaps her estimable husband likewise. But the 'Father of all Good' soon grows to mean the utmost in the regulated mind of a child. I am afraid I can't see how a child is to pray to Jesus Christ as Man. but one may teach him to pray to be likened to him as when he walked the earth —Ever yours,

GEORGE M.

To Algernon Charles Swinburne.

KINGSTON LODGE,
KINGSTON-ON-THAMES, *March 2, 1867.*

MY DEAR SWINBURNE,—I have waited to read the Ode,¹ and also to ship off my Arthur for Switzerland. The Ode is the most nobly sustained lyric in our language, worthy of its theme. Broader, fuller verse I do not know. I had a glance at the proofs, and my chief sentiment was envy. Now I can read without that affliction. For me there will never be time given even to try the rising to such a song. I am passionately anxious to see the 'Italy,'² and have a thousand spirits of fancy about it. Let me know when you return to town, and when you will come and pay us a visit. I need not say that my wife will be glad to see you. Has she not fought your battles? I was in Austria when the heat of the storm was raging. I returned from Italy in the winter after all was over. It would not have been my advice to you to notice the reviewers but it's certainly better never to keep red-hot shot in store, and perhaps one broadside in reply does no harm. I wish rather that it had been

¹ 'Ode on Insurrection in Candia'

² 'A Song of Italy' (1867)

To Captain Maxse

MICKLEMHAM Jan 28 1868

MY DEAREST FRED,—Historicus (on board his Thames wherry) completely smashes Seward (in his Leviathan Monitor)¹

I am one of those who think the Monitor would sink the wherry in an engagement and wish to silence the conquering sound of noisy writers

If the spirit of the nation were of your temper, I should counsel Historicus a show of independence for the nation at large. Fred it's clear there's no such spirit now in this pot bellied country—none of it. Bend while you can do so with a pretence of dignity. I declare to you I have watched the changes of mood in the Government the Journals—say the people and I have seen them moved by apprehension and by panic, and by nothing else in their foreign relations by little else in their dealings at home. The aristocracy has long since sold itself to the middle class that has done its best to corrupt the class under it. I see no hope but in a big convulsion to bring a worthy people forth. The monied class sees the same and reads it—will do anything to avoid it—will eat Historicus's words and him rather than accept the challenge he provokes. You are misled by your natural hot chivalry and don't perceive the humiliations you are bringing on

GEORGE MEREDITH

¹ This refers to the controversy over the *Alabama* claims. Historicus was Sir William Vernon Harcourt. Seward was Secretary of State in President Johnson's cabinet. In 1868 Lord Stanley expressed a willingness to refer the *Alabama* claims to arbitration but the negotiations were interrupted by the demand put forward by Seward that the British recognition of the Southern States as belligerents should be taken into account in computing the damages.

Baudelaire when you come, and anything you may think of besides, in the way of verse I am being carried off from the Singing I stand on an inexorable current I shall look forward to meeting you with great pleasure.
—Your faithful and affectionate GEORGE MEREDITH

To Algernon Charles Swinburne

GERRICK CLUB, Jan 27, 1868

MY DEAR SWINBURNE,—The 'Fortnightly' is no longer in the hands of a company but of a publisher, who tries to diminish the expenses as much as he can; the editor being the chief sufferer I had to pay for the two poems 'The Halt before Rome' has evidently been omitted from the list of what is due to you When I see Morley I will state your complaints to him. but from the sum he gets it's scarcely possible to pay more, without doing so out of his own pocket It will grieve him as it does me to hear that you are dissatisfied—I received for my 'Phaethon' (about 150 lines) £5

Do,—if it's not possible, as I suppose to buy a copy of Hugo's poem, lend it to me for a day or two. They say that Garibaldi has replied to it in verse

I propose to come and lunch with you some afternoon. Will you have me? I will stay from two or three to six, and if we are alone, we will give and take, though I shall take ten times the worth of what I give—I have just got your 'Blake' M. Conway's notice of it in the 'Fortnightly' is eulogistic, but whether sufficient and closely and warmly critical I can't yet say. My wife and Willie hope to greet you in the warm Spring days—Yours ever faithfully,

GEORGE MEREDITH

help doing so hero ? I am every morning on the top of Box Hill—as its flower its bird, its prophet I drop down the moon on one side, I draw up the sun on t other I breathe fine air I shout ha ha to the gates of the world Then I descend and know myself a donkey for doing it Forsooth Tuck I have to remain in harness an unconscionable time (see Poems in Macmillan Fort nightly 'Cornhill' (to come) and articles in 'M Post' etc etc and my desk bursting with MSS)

Now as to your invitation I ll come if I can, and I think I can I have to put off a pre engagement if possible You will see me (if I do come as I hope) about 3 PM Sunday I can t sleep away from home as it appears to upset Marie and we have not yet a dog and do on the left side lean on the wilds, where therero are rabbits and may be weasels So to soften a wife's uneasiness, I leave Surbiton 9 10 that night catch Wimbledon 10 1, home about 11 5 PM

Norbiton I salute thee Tuck, I love thee To thy wife my amiablest salutation and as assable a bow as Briton on his guard dare be guilty of to thy fair guest—
Thine

G M OF BOX HILL

To Arthur G Meredith

GARRICK CLUB Feb 8 1868

MY DEAREST BOY—I have carried about this piece of Club paper for a fortnight having been intending to commence a letter to you there and unable either to do that or to go on with it since My time is occupied with work and I am or rather have been much distracted by affairs My two months down with Captain Maxse was a dead loss of time to me¹ I never regret anything

¹ In the Southampton election of 1867 Captain Maxse stood as Radical candidate Meredith was an active worker on his behalf Cf *Beauchamp's Career*

To William Hardman.

Box Hill, Jan 31, 1868

DEAREST TUCK,—I have been, so please your Worship, hard at work, old boy, or I should have written to you honourable Bench—Confound this reminiscence of your greatness under which I lived three whole years! May it please—no, it doesn't please you nor me neither Sooner or later, as Shirley Brooks says, I was going to write, but I had to manage the 'Fortnightly' for Morley during his absence in America, and that with incessant composition and pot-boilers kept my hands tied But I am training my toes (first and second of right foot) to indite epistles and 'Ips Journal' while I pursue my course complacently above So no one will be complaining, unless it be Her Majesty, for there's a chance that in a fit of distraction I may stick a corn-plaster on the envelope instead of a Queen's Head—a horrible thought and an abominable. Right so, Tuck, and have you read England's Book¹ It sent me up Box Hill dancing a Tupper-jig

Oh, Tuck! What is mortal splendour after all? There may be Purgatory for thee after thou hast ceased to plant a forefoot on the necks of criminals—sniffing the incense of Kingstonian praise Well, pass we to lighter themes Thine ideas are those of the Crowned I am, I was, I always shall be, a vagabond And Heaven must love such to take me in This is veritably as I state it

Willie Maxse has months past had you pointed out to him (cap on, cigar in mouth, cock in th' eye—generally hkerous expression) in our book of photographs He was looking at it yesterday, and coming to you, he cried, 'That's dear Godpapa' He flourishes Who could

¹ *My Journal of Life in the Highlands*, by her late Majesty Queen Victoria

return to England until you do so finally to begin your apprenticeship to some business—I don't mean trade unless you like it, nor do I suppose that you much desire to come home at present One of the nicest arrangements would be for Mama and Willie to go to some pleasant Norman or Biscayan sea coast and welcome you there and I could take you back to Berne Tell me what your views are—Perhaps if you are found to be getting too old for Dr Muller's school you might remove to Dresden Spain and Spanish I fear would be of no use to you in the future How much I long to meet you! Keep pure in mind, unselfish of heart, and diligent in study This is the right way of worshipping God and is better than hymns and sermons and incense We find it doubtful whether God blesses the latter but cultivate the former and you are sure of Him Heed me well when I say this And may God forever bless you, I pray it nightly

To Captain Maxse

MICKLEHAM Feb 17 1868

Our old friend! It chokes me to think that we have lost him I have Purcell's¹ dear old wind blown brown gleam of a face the manner of him the voice and walk more firmly stamped in my mind than most living men are He comes up to meet me now—I see him dashed with spray—parrying a thrust from me—I can't believe he's gone His voice is alive in my ears Only I know that when I come to Holly Hill I shall feel the truth sadly enough Poor dear old man! This will change Summer and the yacht to you and your wife He was so true a gentleman with a pardonable old dog's growl now and then—after all very rarely I reproach myself that I should have let him ever sink a trifle in my esteem And

¹ Purcell skipper of Captain Maxse's yacht

I am able to help him in, as you will believe, but that's another matter. We were badly beaten at Southampton, but I think it will be proved that bribery was done there. We on our side were not guilty of it, I know. It is a very corrupt place. It has been found by experience of the enlarged franchise that where there are large labouring populations depending upon hire (especially in a corrupt and languishing town like Southampton) they will be thrown into the hands of the unscrupulous rich. At all events this is one of the evils we have to contend against until the poor fellows know by enlightenment where their own interests lie and the necessity for their acting in unison and making sacrifices. Old Toryism has still a long spell of life in this country where the vitality has need to be strong in the centre of thick decay that won't be shovelled out—I fancy Captain Maxse had to pay about £2000 for the attempt. He acted simply in a spirit of duty, that he might enter Parliament to plead the cause of the poor.—Our commercial failures of two years back still press on us. Artists and authors suffer particularly. But the strain will be over with me very soon. My novels have been kept back by having had to write on newspapers—the only things that paid.—So take this as a moral—don't think of literature as a profession. I believe you to have too much good sense—Who are the kind people of the name of Nicolls whom you visit in Berne?—Mr. Burnand asked after you the other day, and sent his love to you. He still writes regularly on 'Punch' and puts plays on the stage. He is a distant relative—is he not?—of M. Emile Burnand your master—I calculate that I shall be free in June, about the middle of the month, and may be with you then or later for a tour together. But would you prefer to go with the other fellows, and spend some days with me afterwards? I think it quite as well that you should not

at the Burford or Beehive If you are for companionship with me J——, you will come Write by return, and arrange Bring all with you If it rain, we'll draw the blinds, let fly the corks and dance If it's fair I'll sweat you gently over the hills and home to our tobacco Parliament I can't say fairer—I would send my love to Mrs J—— but fear your tarnishing it in the transmission But I kiss my hand to the heavens and let her only look on your head and she will see the act reflected—
Your friendliest

GEORGE MEREDITH

To Captain Maxse

MICHAELHAM Dec. 10 1869

MY DEAR FRED—Morison will take notice of your pamphlet he says he cannot do so more than incidentally as he would have done if you had written a book

Greenwood has been (as one can conceive possible) too busy to read anything—The 'Holy Grail' is wonderful isn't it? The lines are satin lengths the figures Sévres china I have not the courage to offer to review it, I should say such things To think!—it's in these days that the foremost poet of the country goes on fluting of creatures that have not a breath of vital humanity in them, and doles us out his regular five feet with the old trick of the vowel endings—The Euphust's tongue, the Exquisite's leg the Curate's moral sentiments the British matron and her daughter's purity of tone —so he talks so he walks, so he snuffles so he appears divine—I repeat with my Grannam—to think!—and to hear the chorus of praise too! Why this stuff is not the Muse it's Musery The man has got hold of the Muses clothes line and hung it with jewelry

But the 'Lucretius' is grand I can't say how much I admire it and hate the Sir Pandarus public which has

I am always on my guard against the influence of these sectional impressions, and try so much to get and keep possession of a man's character, so that I may never fall into these silly errors. It seems to me that the old man has gone carrying my debt to him away for good. The little history revealed to you by his death is wretched — What will be done for the children? That's the most lamentable thought of all.

Marie is in grief for the loss of Purcell. He belonged to our early marriage days. On my soul I think I shall never smell salt water or look on a grey ridge of sea or sea haze without thinking of him.

The typhus probably followed gastric fever, which one gets from fretting, it speedily sends us on

Alas! my dear Fred, I didn't expect sad news from you

Our Willie Maxse will be three years old in July.

Then let me have Ben.¹ I delight (so does Marie) to think of him coming. But I'm bothered, I'll write about him to-morrow.—Your loving

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To F—— J——s.

Box Hill,
Nov., *Lord Guy of London Day*

FRIEND J——, — It being the fashionable Season in Brighton at Brighton you are, of course. Now, your way back to Kingston lies exactly by Box Hill. Will you take us en route? Do! I have not seen you for so long that on my honour I could listen to your puns with pleasure: and who could say more? We have been most unfortunate during the summer, with first the soaking, till the Inns were full right on to October. But at present Inns gape, and we can get one room for you

¹ A red retriever dog

irritable as a woman impetuous as a tyrant He seeks the short road to his ends and the short road is, we know a bloody one He is not wise Mill is but Carlyle has most light when he burns calmly Much of Ruskin's Political Economy will, I suspect be stamped as good by posterity He brings humanity into it This therefore is not the Political Economy of our day—I have turned Wendell Phillips like a drenching fireman's hose on a parson and made him sputter and gutter and go to his wife to trim his wick The Oration is very noble Adieu Write some day next year—Your loving

GEORGE MERFITH

To Captain Maxse

MICKLEHAM 1869

MY DEAR FRFD— Will is in the garden on a rocking horse new gift from his Aunt His seat is as Cardigan's entering Balaclava guns—Of course you've read Kinglake, very deliberate, very conscientious He has done all the work of the History of the Crime War except to write it His writing is so fine—so fine (in both senses) that to say it is penmanship seems best to express it—One sees the whole Balaclava business as he saw it (and you) from the heights through Kinglake's slowly moving, dioramic opera glass, with the fifty degree magnifying power of patient imagination, full study and testimony superadded It deserves praise and thanks Contemporaneous history should thus be written but it is not an artistic piece of history How glorious Scarlett at the head of his 300 Greys and Inniskillens! Yet one can't help feeling that Kinglake makes them go astonishingly like the horsemen in a peepshow Scarlett enters —pause now Shegogg —pause Aide de camp —pause now the Greys presently the Innis

corrupted this fine (natural) singer. In his degraded state I really believe he is useful, for he reflects as much as our Society chooses to show of itself. The English notion of passion, virtue, valour, is in his pages and the air and the dress we assume are seen there—I turn to Rabelais and Montaigne with relief. See what a gentleman Boccaccio is in his narration¹ and always manly, always fresh.—Do you care to find the Holy Grail, Fred²? Twenty years ago it would have excited me. Thus your foremost Poet is twenty years behind his time. Of course I expect a contrary opinion from you. But answer me—Isn't there a scent of damned hypocrisy in all this lisping and vowelled purity of the Idylls²? Well¹ just as you like. It's fashionable; it pleases the rose-pink ladies, it sells. Enough—I am your loving

GEORGE M.

I spoke strongly to Greenwood of Bradlaugh; impressed him, I trust

To Captain Maxse.

Box Hill, Dec 27, 1869

MY DEAR FRED,—I return Ruskin's letter, a characteristic one. I am chiefly glad that you should be in correspondence with a man who will appreciate and stimulate you; glad too that you seem to see where he falls short, or, rather, aims blindly. It is the spirituality of Carlyle that charms him. What he says of Tennyson I too thought in my boy's days, that is, before I began to think. Tennyson has many spiritual indications, but no philosophy, and philosophy is the palace of thought. Mill is essentially a critic: it is his heart, not his mind, which sends him feeling ahead. But he really does not touch the soul and springs of the Universe as Carlyle does. Only, when the latter attempts practical dealings he is

R has some vague truth for a backbone to his preposterous priestly attitude and inebriate conceit as against adversaries

The Parsonry are irritating me fearfully, but a non celibate clergy are a terrific power They are interwound with the whole of the Middle class like the poisonous ivy Oh ! for independence, that I might write my mind of these sappers of our strength —Your loving

GEORGE M

To John Morley¹

MICKLEHAM Jan 2 1880

MY DEAR MORLEY —Very glad to hear from you—I called on Morison He told me of your passage to Glasgow and lecture on Count d'Orsay a capital subject for a philosopher I shall read it in the Fortnightly — Some fear struck me that you would not find things well at Lytham

I should have written to ask leave to review Tennyson's Arthurian Cycles but I could not summon heart even to get the opening for speaking my mind on it —I can hardly say I think he deserves well of us, he is a real singer and he sings this mild fluency to this great length Malory's Morte Arthur is preferable Fancy one affecting the great poet and giving himself up (in our days !— he must have lost the key of them) to such dandiacial fluting —Yet there was stuff here for a poet of genius to

¹ Now Viscount Morley of Blackburn P C O M F R S Till the end of his life Lord Morley's books as they appeared were read criticised and appreciated by Meredith A short list of them is appended for convenient reference *Edmund Burke* (1867) *Critical*

On Compromise
(1879) *Richard*
ne (1903) *Lord*
all Mall Galette

killens —So on Very good, very bad Adieu —Your
loving GEORGE MEREDITH

To Captain Maase

MICKLEHAM, Jan 2, 1870.

MY DEAR FRED,—It's difficult to speak mildly of a man who calls John Mill blockhead, and dares to assume Carlyle's mantle of Infallibility on the plea that it is his 'master's' Still I agree with much that he says of Carlyle I hold that he is the nearest to being an inspired writer of any man in our times, he does proclaim inviolable law he speaks from the deep springs of life. All this But when he descends to our common pavement, when he would apply his eminent spiritual wisdom to the course of legislation, he is no more sagacious nor useful nor temperate than a flash of lightning in a grocer's shop. 'I purify the atmosphere,' says this agent. 'You knock me down, spoil my goods and frighten my family,' says the grocer —Philosophy, while rendering his dues to a man like Carlyle and acknowledging itself inferior in activity, despises his hideous blustering impatience in the presence of progressive facts

Read the 'French Revolution' and you listen to a seer the recent pamphlets, and he is a drunken country squire of superordinary ability

Carlyle preaches work for all to all Good But his method of applying his sermon to his 'nigger' is intolerable —Spiritual light he has to illuminate a nation. Of practical little or none, and he beats his own brains out with emphasis

As to what R says of John Mill I have not the Pol Ec handy. I am inclined to think the present generation of P. Economists wrong—that they don't see that the obligations of Wealth pertain to its sources, and that

A copy of H Rochefort's *Marseillaise* may interest you, it is the Republican (Red) shrill (the Irish word escapes me) over Victor Noir¹. It is a good study of the French period—Well after reading it and repressing my gorge at this undignified fury and savage friendship I turned to a leading article in the *Morning Post* in which the assassinated youngster is supremely sneered at as a linendraper's apprentice who caught an appetite for literature from the *Petit Journal* (It seems that no less a man than Weiss had some hopes of him) On the whole, I was critically speaking most disgusted with our high noted friend

This number of the 'Fortnightly' is excellent your Condorcet to my mind an example of your best judicial style, minus the judicial excess of precision (occasionally as from an old maid to an errand boy—so like!) These studies which you put into so noble a shape and impregnate with your full mind, will help to bear good fruit in all directions Meanwhile they are fine reading Take to history Preserve this style in historical narrative and your name will not take a second rank My dear M! I don't know how it may be with you I trust that you may have all your strength about you If it ever comforts you to think of my affection be sure that you have it—Yours

GEORGE MEREDITH

To John Morley

MICKLEMHAM DORRINGTON Jan. 27 1870

MY DEAREST M —The drama of a household burnt out under my eye here has given me some excitement Irish Mr Sewell six feet five haired like Erebus brawny as Vulcan's first forgeman, with a sniffling English wife, whose shawl is like her nose always thawing off her

¹ Killed by Prince Pierre Bonaparte at Auteuil Jan 10 1870

animate the figures and make them reflect us, and on us I read the successive mannered lines with pain—yards of linen—drapery for the delight of ladies who would be in the fashion.—The praises of the book shut me away from my fellows. To be sure, there 's the magnificent 'Lucretius'

Fred Maxse has been correspoding with Ruskin—Anon, anon I am not at liberty to write of the latter's monstrous assumption of wisdom.

Ah! the Hindhead and a Southwester on it in March or April!—Yes! and then to Florence

Let me hear when you are in London I shall not be up till about the 11th or 12th. We will dine at the Garrick, an you please Good luck speed the 'Pall Mall'—I rejoice to hear that your head is teeming. Did I tell you that Fred and I went to sit under Bradlaugh one evening? The man is neither to be laughed nor sneered down, nor trampled He will be a powerful speaker I did my best to make Greenwood understand that. It was really pleasant to hear those things spoken which the parsonry provoke Here, at a party where our Willie entertained company of his own age, the hostess feared to see the children standing in a ring because (she said—and she is by way of being independent) the little — (parson's children—he begets annually—the children die decennially—and he is 'chastened' but sees no natural curse—!) the little — might think it was meant for dancing !

To John Morley

Box Hill, Jan 13, 1870

MY DEAR FRIEND M,—You will write and let me know if there is anything I can do for you My hands are altogether at your service.

I hope to write some papers on poetry and versification —I hear good things said of your Condorcet and am convinced you are getting the right historical tone Young Trollope complains that you employ hyphens too largely I quote the criticism pour votre gouverne Now good night, my dear friend I do but chat to amuse you, if things permit of it Doubtless you have your eye on the news, and I need not discuss politics Adieu

To John Morley

Box Hill, March 5 1870

MY DEAREST M,—We are both with you in heart When your heart is bowed to the black metal gates words of the best of friends can be but poorly helpful but think of us and our love for you when you look up and around you once again —I had this shock when I was a little boy, and merely wondered —Your affectionate

GEORGE MEREDITH

To William Hardman

Box Hill, June 15 1870

DEAREST T —It must have been as you say I was thinking of twenty I send now cheque dated 24th (which is a liberty on my part) The truth is I have sent in my work and am waiting for payment which I don't want to press for and it is just possible I may have to ask you to hold on till the end of the month when I come upon other resources sufficient for the time You can either retain the old cheque or tell me it is torn up

Next week we are engaged up to (save Tuesday) Saturday morning Remember too that the dry days are going This next Saturday we dine out, Friday is my town day Monday also What do you say to Tuesday? On Wednesday and Thursday we are at

shoulder, and a family of four, a good honest lot for that matter, lived in a hut in the corner of a field abutting on our acres, to watch potatoes grow. Sewell was away at work, his wife sniffing somewhere, when out flaps the big girl with a whinny, Fire ! Fire !—and I giving a touch to 'Richmond' I was soon in a gentle rain of thatch. The girl tumbled, and I assure you I saw the vision of Danae in a jiffy She lived (like woman's virtue) under a thatched roof I saved the nuptial bed of these rash and unwearied propagators ; my gardener arriving later attached himself to the pigs There would have been, as I told him later, a chance of roast pig—! I repeated Charles Lamb's story to him He is without imagination and 'hoped I was joking.'

. I'm afraid the 'Pall Mall' can't be doing well, though when I went to Greenwood he insisted on the cheerfulness of its condition—All speak with regret of it and of what they hear of it—The tone—eh ? of the leaders doesn't seem to me so good, though it's above the newspaper type You see they have dealt with Bradlaugh. I spoke to Greenwood about him, insisting that he was a man of power, and was not to be sneered down, and that on the whole he said certain things comforting to hear by one suffering from Simon Peter.—As to 'Harry Richmond,' I fear I am evolving his personality too closely for the public, but a man must work by the light of his conscience if he's to do anything worth reading—I see the 'Quarterly' deals rather firmly with the 'Holy Grail'—something in these days. It is hard on the 'Lucretius'—compares the flow of the English lines with the Latin Hexameters of the poet No one but Milton has the roll of the English line The French Alexandrine, which I have been studying of late, is (though far off) nearer to ancient poetical music than anything we have out of Milton When I have leisure

appears in the Cornhill the 1st October By that time I hope to have another ready

Wilkins in very fine condition Ourselves middling—in want of outing Marie well I hope the illustrious Editor of 'Punch' has got round again and rounder Adieu to you all—Your loving GEORGE MEREDITH

The last of dear old St Bernard was that he was down on his back. We are off for a couple of days to Lady Caroline Maxse's Effingham Hill She has taken to Marie

To Arthur G. Meredith

ENGLAND Box Hill, July 14 1870

MY DEAR ARTHUR—Write to Madame Poussielgue¹ when you know the day Professor Zeller starts and go yourself that day The later, the better for your Aunt Betty does not leave here till the first days of August and I should like you to see her, and to have her report of your condition Besides she is charming society Do not fail at one time or other of your visit to make the expedition to the Grande Chartreuse I am sure it will delight you Whatever money you may be in need of you shall have Send me (clearly written) a detail of the value of your florins in francs, and how much the journey to Joubasseau costs you When there use what money you have remaining for pocket-money and more shall be forwarded to you, according to the necessity of the case I wish you to be careful but to feel tolerably independent and in all things to enjoy your holiday

It has looked recently as if we should have war between France and Prussia and I fear it must come on but I think not immediately When men's brains are in

¹ The eldest Miss Vulliamy had married Commandant Poussielgue of Pont de Beau Vouloir Savoy

Effingham Hill I mean, if you are at home, to be invited to you, solus, in early July—when you haven't trumpets in your gardens and are not entertaining the wealth and beauty of the district You will see Poco

Dickens gone! The 'Spectator' says he beat Shakespeare at his best, and instances Mrs Gamp as superior to Juliet's nurse This in a critical newspaper!

My love to all at home, and hope that they will be footing our brown hill soon—Your loving

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To William Hardman.

Box Hill, July 6, 1870

Sweet Justice of Norbiton, neighbour of Jones,
Have you paid in the £15 cheque?
The account at my banker's has recently grown
As fat as the

But 'tis sweating already, it dwindles apace:
So I pray you (and here's to your luck)
Don't give to the matter a minute more grace,
And adieu, Serenissimo Tuck!

Halloo! you are off to the Isle of Wight? Do you remember the 'race' off Sandown? Perhaps I may run down for two or three days.—Thus our affairs: Marie waits to let her house, when she will convoy Wilkins to Nonancourt I remain working somewhere for three weeks, pouncing on friends, then I go to fetch her back. We return in September. Arturus has received an invitation from Marie's sister to go to Joubasseau in Dauphiné for his hohdays (Basle, Geneva, Chambéry), so he will be comfortable. I shan't be able to meet him. I wish you could see some of the letters he has written lately. They speak promisingly.

My novel 'Harry Richmond' is out of my hands and

dispute the aggrandisement of Prussia is right it is not a Vanity war nor a King's, but a people's war—war of Germans and Frenchmen a trial of actual strength for supremacy and it was nonsenso to think of postponing it ruinous to delay—The tone of our Press is sickening—No correspondents allowed so my chance is gone

To John Morley

Box Hill, 18 0

MY DEAR M.—I found the boy still troubled yesterday and to-day the doctor says he will have to rest for two or three days meanwhile he goes on well Very doubtful whether Marie will be able to bring him over this week The next I must give to Fred Maxse Afterwards you willing we may come That is if I am on the spot It's possible that I may start to French quarters for Borthwick—If you like I will run to you on Thursday This war agitates me gazing on an old tree or talking with you, are my febrifuges I have just had the *Book of Orm*¹ sent to me from the author It may be a settling it's not a composing draught The news papers are mere chips of dry biscuit to my devouring appetite for telegrams and details Yesterday and to day, thank heaven they haven't (I don't see the *Times*) sermonized England hasn't screamed and scolded and clacked and nodded her cap and sniffled to her clergyman for comfort—I wrote some verse to you this morning but as it isn't finished can't send it Taste the beginning perhaps never to end—never to have tail-like scorned pigs

Friend when the thundercloud is low
And in the expectancy and throo
Field hill and wave of forest grow
The hue that edges black on fair

¹ *The Book of Orm* by Robert Buchanan

sufficient to meet the exigencies of affairs, they fight
 If the war should burst out, I shall be grieved, for I like
 France, and yet see the good for Europe of having a strong
 central State composed of a solid people There is no
 need at present to consider the course that you should
 take in the event of war encircling little Wurtemberg
 You will like the Commandant (equal in military rank
 to our major) very much He has seen a great deal of
 campaigning both in the Crimea and in Algeria He is
 a Frenchman of the best kind. You will not find him an
 admirer of Prussia, but keep your judgment in balance
 on all questions upon which you have no personal ex-
 perience, and have had no opportunities for reflection . . .
 I have passed Chambéry and been at Grenoble All the
 Dauphiné country is beautiful, so you are sure to be
 pleased I trust with all my heart you will be happy,
 and am your loving father,

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To John Morley

Box Hill, July 21, 1870

MY DEAR MORLEY,—. . . What news!—this of Prévost
 Paradol¹ Why talk of the horrors of war when we are
 fronting artillery at every second of our lives—My ‘Pall
 Mall’ comes to me this morning with the most ludicrous
 blunder about a name of a place ever printed Forbach
 is treated of as being in the Black Forest (where there is a
 little village of the name), and the ‘Pall Mall’ speculates
 upon why hostilities should have commenced there!—
 Our friend can afford such errors less than any other
 journal—On the whole, I side with France, or so incline
 The instinct of the people in seizing an opportunity to

¹ Lucien Anatole Prévost Paradol, journalist and *littérateur*, member of French Academy (1865), was born in Paris, August 8, 1829. In 1870, he was appointed Minister Plenipotentiary to the United States of America, but had scarce arrived in Washington when his position became so difficult that, losing heart, he killed himself.

view thoroughly good and not likely to succeed Armies can't do it they can't check the tide of a great nation As to the Emperor he appears to have thought the season for a trial of the new breech loader field pieces and Mitrailleuse had come just as Bismarck could not afford to delay in trying his needle gun on the Austrians The Emperor had note of warning that his routed Prussians were also busy perfecting mysterious instruments Poor devilry ! All devilry is poor in the contemplation But it is still the chief engine of history You and I are forced into our channels by it Friend in the woods, you and I may challenge the world to match us in happiness Out of them I feel myself pulled back a century or so —And into a splash of shuddering matter

By the way you must remember that the Emperor did not make the grief against Prussia It came to his hand It was deep in the French heart I turn to the Book of Orm and find a refrain—

Grow Seed blossom Brain
Deepen deeper into pain

Title of piece 'The Devil's Mystics' There !

Again—

God feared the thing He fashioned
And fled into a cloud !'

Public of Britain ! Here he is—your poet !

Since that day with cloudy face
Of His own handworl afraid
God from His Heavenly hiding place
Peered at the thing He made

Aha ! If He made Bismarck and Napoleon according to the view of the Stock Exchange the British Spinster Clericus and Press (siding for once with their betters) then no wonder !—I would not mind our language if it

No voice is heard, and not a sound,
 Though listen all the hollow ground,
 But swift I have known a white dove thread the air.

So now these lines to you, between
 The loaded darkness and dead green,'

Etc., etc. no more space.

May our hearts be stout, and we prove our begetting
 honest!—Ever yours, GEORGE M.

To John Morley.

Box Hill, July 25, 1870

MY DEAREST M,— I am glad you like the verses
 The next batch you will find plunge deeper. Mind, I
 swore them as to you, and you (though you blinked at
 the time, as much as to tell me I was intimidating you)
 consented to take them—I am in poor mood for writing
 an attack of stomach keeps me singular in ideas, and,
 like the contemplative dervish, with a fixed eye on the
 centre of my being, whence does not issue song at present

The war of '70 is direct issue of '66 Just as we abused
 the Prussians then we howl at the French now, but the
 tremendous armaments on both sides were meant for this
 duel, and it mattered very little what was the pretext for
 the outbreak Surely it's a case of Alcades Ambo. The
 French felt themselves perpetually menaced by distended
 Prussia, irritated by her tone, even alarmed by the
 rumour and dread of projects the existence of which her
 antecedents might seem to warrant At any rate it was
 a fight to come on, and here we have it, and if we are
 energetic and wise it may be the last of the great fights
 of Europe The two foremost States in war and intellect
 may well be committed to cut the bloody tangle. I feel
 deeply for the Germans, I quite understand the ardour
 of the French I think their cause, from their point of

which he can charge to the next account I cannot afford more just now The French peasantry around Sedan claim everything of us that we can give They are barely held up in life by the bread we are able to furnish and a third of France will be demanding succour in the winter Horrible to think of!—But do not let compassion or personal sympathy make your judgment swerve This war is chargeable upon France and the Emperor is the Knave of the pack Two generations of Frenchmen have been reared on the traditions of Napoleonism and these meant the infliction of wrongs and outrages on other nations for the glory and increase of their own They elected a Napoleon for chief because of his name and in spite of his known character It is said, the French peasantry did not want war that their ignorance offended in electing this man but who can deny that it was the Napoleonic prestige which gave him his first step to the throne by overwhelming votes? This man was the expression of their ignorance or folly or vanity he appealed to the Napoleonism in them and had a prompt response A more ignoble spectacle than the recriminations of Emperor and people upon one another as to the origin of the war, after defeat history does not show The Germans on the contrary, reap the reward of a persistently honourable career in civic virtue Consider what the meaning of civic virtue may be It comprises a multitude of other virtues As to German boasting, why the English also are great boasters See the best in those about you I say this, and I admire and respect the Germans and God knows my heart bleeds for the French But my aim and I trust it will be yours is never to take counsel of my sensations but of my intelligence I let the former have free play but deny them the right to bring me to a decision You are younger, have a harder task in doing that you have indeed a task in

came from an unselfish people. but a people notoriously craving peace for comfort's sake, and commerce's—they do but scold, they provoke contempt.—I regret bitterly that I am not out on a post of observation I may still go for a month.—Your loving GEORGE MEREDITH

To Arthur G. Meredith

Box Hill, Dorking,
England, Oct 25, 1870

MY DEAR ARTHUR,— I am not very rich at present, but I don't want you to be without pocket-money and minor comforts—See that you have warm clothing for the winter—all that is really needful I gladly pay for I leave it to your good sense to take measures to avoid chills, and to take daily reasonable exercise, and not to walk to excess. Your gastric attack last year will serve for a warning. Don't ever sit in clothes you have sweated in: the trouble of going upstairs and 'grooming' yourself saves trouble, and worse, in the end. Fellows who contract illnesses are usually guilty (I don't say always) of indolence—carelessness is only one form of indolence—You will note that I lay stress on the physical condition. I do so for the reason that it is the index to the moral condition in young men. It is ten to one that a healthy lad is of good general worth. If not physically healthy he will not be of much value. The day comes when we are put to the test, and it is for this day we should prepare with cheerful heart. Don't imagine me to be lecturing you. I have favourable reports of you, and I merely repeat simple words of advice that it will be well for you to keep in mind—Tell Professor Zeller, with my compliments, that if there is a fund for the wounded soldiers in Stuttgart, I shall be glad if he will put my name down for the subscription of £1,

work I keep the action of your mind in abeyance Young eyes can observe shrewdly, but the opinions of young men are not quite so important —I am your loving father,

GEORGE MEREDITH

To William Hardman

21 CAVENDISH PLACE
EASTBOURNE SUSSEX

MY DEAREST TUCK —Motives of Economy decided us to come here much to my regret We were at Tongswood at the Cotterills and it was cheap to run to the Sussex near to the Isle of Wight coast But O you ! had you written to Holly Hill you would have fetched me over to Sandown and I should have fixed the bargain with a lodgement letter I remained for a fortnight at Maxse's yachting when the gales permitted it Then joined Marie at Tongswood good air good hostess and host Eastbourne is on the whole pleasant This salt water fetches me round Tuck It is the next best to mountain air

Marie and I thanked you for your thorough kind letter I knew how you would both feel on hearing of the dear good old man's death A just man not lost for ever to his family for the example of such a man is a constant presence But a dead loss to the poor

So you do both care for H Richmond ¹ I hoped it I wish some one like Shirley Brooks would let it be known it's mine Lethbridge tells me he has seen it attributed to Lever ! A word from you Tuck in the august Ear of Punch anon anon sir Mind and tell me how you like it as you go on I shall have another to follow when Richmond ceases and so by drumming may make the public hear me at least —Oh this war I burst with pity for the French but can't say they have not deserved defeat Was ever a nation so shattered ? In nothing

¹ *The Adventures of Harry Richmond* then appearing in the *Cornhill Magazine*

discerning the difference between what your senses suggest and what your mind However, try not to be let into some degree of injustice to your host, the German people, out of pity for France —We had a capital time at Eastbourne, good bathing, Willie paddling up to his knees in salt water half the day. Now we have the autumnal gales and Box Hill looking on the last colours of the year I saw your Grandpapa Meredith on my way to Captain Maxse's , he had been unwell, but was better , he asked after you and so did Mrs M They were anxious as to your situation in the territory of war Captain Maxse is out and out French , Mr. Morison intensely German , Mr Morley and I do our utmost to preserve an even balance There is talk of an armistice, but Paris must fall before the French will seriously treat for peace Count Bismarck gives audience to-day to that deleterious little Frenchman Thiers, who has been poisoning his countrymen for half a century, and now runs from Court to Court, from minister to minister, to get help to undo his own direct work Count Bismarck will be amused, for he has a keen appreciation of comedy Philosophers would laugh aloud at the exhibition of the author of the 'Consulate and the Empire' in the camp at Versailles Modern France has been nourished on this lying book — Here in Mickleham we are naturally anxious about the Nonancourt¹ people The latest telegrams say that the Germans are moving on Dreux—no great distance from the colony You can fancy how sad the Old House looks now the good old man has gone²—God bless you, my dear boy If you have anything to narrate of the war, the wounded, the prisoners, etc , it might be useful to me Train your eyes to observe, and while they are at that

¹ At Nonancourt, in Normandy, on the Avre, Mrs Meredith's three brothers lived and owned wool-spinning mills—close neighbours of the Waddington family, owning cotton mills on the same river

² The death of Mr Justin Vulliamy

do not altogether underrate the fine qualities of German youth but perhaps your immediate sympathies and a somewhat exaggerated sensitiveness, stand in your way. It will be a pity if this is so and for more reasons than one. If you do not cultivate the people you are living amongst in your youth you will fail in having pleasant places to look back on—landmarks of your young days. And besides the Germans are your hosts and you owe them at least a guest's thankfulness. I esteem them deeply for their fine moral qualities. Just now they are abusing us roundly but that will pass away. I know they have the capacity for friendship and that as a rule English friendships are not so lasting. Look around you and try to be accessible to your German associates. Consider whether you are not yielding to luxurious pre-dispositions in your marked preference for English ones. You will see enough of the latter when you return here—I have had a letter from Mr Jessopp in which he suggests that you might when you come back go to Oxford and try for the Taylour Scholarship in modern languages. Your knowledge of German might give you a chance. Are you sure that you are thoroughly grounded in German to stand a sharp competitive examination?—that is to write good scholarly German prose and perhaps translate into German verse. Set to your mind this task. Let me hear what you think of it. By winning the Scholarship you might be on your way to a fellowship. I will do my best to support you that you may be sure of. But you will have to fall to work rigorously. Of course I like you to indulge in composition, but now is the time to store facts to sharpen your weapon to make yourself capable by serving your apprenticeship. This is what the Germans do—they serve their apprenticeship thoroughly, and as they are not critics before their time they are competent critics when the time comes.

have they done well, since Napoleon gave the wink to Gramont to roar in the Chamber

My love to you all with the children Kisses to you and them from Willie Godson You should see him in his paddle-boots in the low-tide pools.

Tuck, you did not reply to my letter because you were working for Lee Steere and Baggallay ! Marie will write to D'Troia on her return to Box She did not at once owing to hesitation as to the course to take, which ultimately Economy, our damned old friend, decided for us, and not badly, except for the loss of you two and a certain particular quality (I fancy it) haunting your district

Have I made it plain to you that the feelingness of your letter to Mickleham was much felt there ? I 've no more space, Tuck, dear heart I could chatter to you like a summer brook Adieu Imagine me talking on as I do from hour to hour.—Your loving

GEORGE MEREDITH

To Arthur G. Meredith.

Box Hill, Dorking,
England, Dec 23, 1870

MY DEAREST ARTHUR,—I hope you will get this letter on the morning of Christmas Day to greet you and wish you happiness, strength, and fortune, which results from the two former gifts —There will be money for you Meantime if you are in want of funds, you can apply to the Professor for assistance with my sanction I know I can rely on you to be moderate, and you in turn will feel that I desire you to have sufficient for your needs Supposing you should go to Heidelberg for a few days you must have the wherewithal Be careful to be warmly clad And when on a tour have a care of your tongue and your company The Professor says you do not consort with Germans at all I am grieved at this I am sure you

beretta I cannot but feel at times that you undoubtedly have what I confess I have thought once or twice before —a tendency towards extremes though the demure look you assume is very becoming and eclipses all the curates ever dreamed of by a pulpit stricken virgin But I object to your taking on a sacerdotal garb It is true that you should have a distinctive dress and I think it right that Purcell should have one likewise The Basin of Miraculous Water which he carries about that you may rub it upon the stomachs of this generation would I perceive clearly not impress mankind with a proper sense of its holiness if you and he were not peculiarly attired and in our climate you would not (at least not yet) go about like a couple of St Johns Still I demur to a priestly garb—the more especially when I bear in mind your late extraordinary oration against One who turned the Water into Wine—in which you so violently denounced Him for having done so Let me remark parenthetically that I do not deem Him unwise or misguided in this matter but you will declare that I wish to force an argument and I let the subject pass That the parents should be separated immediately after the birth of one child is I am prepared to say a mistake in your doctrine It is not human You state that you have become superhuman All are not as you however I have read in the Pall Mall Gazette of your appalling invasion of the banquet given by the Mayor of Southampton to the American Plenipotentiaries come to treat for the admission of Great Britain among the States of the Union It appears that you approve the policy of our becoming one Star in the spangled Banner I have myself previously advocated the measure But as I never can go so far as you I cannot countenance you in exclaiming that you are the Water God of Hamble Point and then at a given signal to Purcell mailing cockshies of all the

Don't think I preach too much I am naturally anxious about you I have passed through the wood, and know which are the paths to take, which to avoid. By following my directions you will spare yourself many troubles, many a heartache—Mr Morley, who is an Oxford man, says that you would have a fair chance of the Taylour Scholarship, if you have a grammatical and literary mastery of German You would have to choose two languages Absolute excellence in one would land you victor Mr Swinburne gained the Scholarship through his knowledge of French, which is consummate Probably Professor Max Muller would be one of the examiners

We have now the winter on us Let me hear what you are doing, and how it fares with you You never speak of the other fellows living with the Professor Can you make nothing of them ?—Have you had your interview with Marshal Canrobert ? Major Poussielque is commanding, I believe, at Langres, which is now invested Good-bye, my dear boy, and God be with you—Your loving father,

GEORGE MEREDITH

Do not forget to present my warmest compliments and my Christmas greetings to Professor Zeller and his wife

To Captain Maxse

KINGSTON-ON-THAMES, S W, *Christmas 1870.*

Yes, Fred, what you say of the beautiful picture presented by an Ascetic priesthood which shall be allowed marriage that one child of the union may reproduce the cultivated virtues of the parents, is very true Something of this I have said before (though you will not remember it), but I objected and still object to the priesthood Why any priesthood ? Surely when I see you walk from Holly Hill to Bursledon in stole and cope and

To William Hardman

GARRICK CLUB Dec 26 1870

MY DEAR LORD MAYOR—All Christmas honours and delights to you!

The other day I quietly informed Morley of your elevation¹ Looking at him (about one minute subsequently) I saw him collecting his editorial fragments with a hand pressed hard on his fore midriff He faintly expressed his amazement but as became a hero his first thought was for his friend—Morison he said must not swallow this unheard of pill without due preparation it would be too much for him in his sad state We agreed to concoct a rigmarole and write an account of a Kingston Pantomime—‘Tuck Transformed — telling him at the end of it that all was true Morley and I have determined at the first intimation of success of the French arms to get up a subscription for an

Apotheosis of Tuck

A Christmas table of Wild Boar's Head Ribs of Beef
 Plum P with honest hands grasping
 below Blessedness above—in the
 Centre the Great One rising

At Nonancourt they have the Uhlans

Henri Poussielgue is at Langres now in the thick of it a good soldier and I trust he may be spared Once more Tuck for the fortieth time I tell you to look at my Ode to France in the forthcoming number of the Fortnightly review

And now may all legitimate pleasures be yours may your wife still see you scaling eminences and accept my love and esteem and may your children flourish as I am happy to state that Willie Godson does, and Arthur of Stuttgart—Your cordial GEORGE MEREDITH

¹ To the Mayoralty of Kingston on Thames

wine-bottles on the Mayor's hospitable board, and drenching the guests with water from an enormous hose in connection with the main-pipes. Here I decidedly join in the condemnation of you pronounced by the newspapers. Your behaviour was essentially tyrannical. That I was prepared for. But it was also indiscreet, for it will raise the masses not only against you but against the element you adore. If every one of these American envoys had come from the State of Maine, you would but have given them their evening dose. As it is, you have disgusted the majority. You will have seen my defence of you in the 'Mg Pt.' It is weak, because I really could not say much. I have restrained Morley's hand both in the 'Saturday' and the 'Fortnightly.' The joke in the 'Times'—that 'the notorious Naval Captain who walked over Hampshire with his Neptune behind him, drew the water which he dashed at the people's bellies from his brain, and had apparently an inexhaustible supply'—is neither witty nor laughable. But that it is thought wit, and is laughed at, should make you reflect. There is evidently the will to laugh. I consider this a damning sign.

I know your rejoinder perfectly—Extremes are the chief teachers—One excess corrects another, Truth must out in any shape. Very well. In December of 1866 I was finally convinced that you would on all subjects take your own course, or at least imagine you were doing it by going further than any one else would or dared go. Voilà! The poet has said, *Ire necesse est*—we must go on and each in his own way, I suppose—I have just finished the History of the inextinguishable Sir Harry Firebrand of the Beacon, Knight Errant of the 19th century, in which mirror you may look and see—My dear Fred and his loving friend, GEORGE MEREDITH.

realities Through such a course of teaching men must go Can you pretend to believe that France was not in need of the bitterest of lessons ? Her philosophers said one thing but military glory stuck to the passions of her people And many of her philosophers allowed themselves to be hoodwinked by the idea that France should be dominant for the good of mankind instead of seeking to make her dominant by virtue and a bright example She trusted to the sword without even testing her steel She is down I grieve for her, I detest the severities practised upon her But I cannot forget that she appealed to the *droit du plus fort* Nor can I forget that she has always been the perturbation of Europe The Germans may be That is to be seen They at least are what they pretend to be A considerable number of cheap prophets have followed their triumphant march howling I prefer to wait without prophesying Let France train a virtuous democracy and she will spring a mine in Germany amply to be revenged on the Hohen zollerns Her cries of vengeance now are after the pattern—too shockingly similar!—of Ancient Pistol She eats and ere she swears

What I wish is that you and I should look to the good future of men with some faith in it and capacity to regard current phases of history without letting our sensations blind and bewilder us I am neither German nor French nor unless the nation is attacked English I am European and Cosmopolitan—for humanity ! The nation which shows most worth is the nation I love and reverence

Confess that the French have conducted themselves like mere children throughout The probation may accelerate their growth and bring their practice up to their best professions The Germans have behaved as the very sternest of men caring more for their Fatherland

To Captain Maxse.

Box Hill, Dorking, Jan 3, 1871

MY DEAR FRED,—Your last letter from Effingham Hill reached me (with the date on the envelope Dec 9) on Sunday morning, open. I have written to the Postmaster-General about it—According to appointment I walked up to Ranmore, hailed for you in dense fog, and had, like the just man, nothing but the sound of my own voice for answer.

Good health to you and all dear to you this New Year! It begins lamentably. We need to be braced

The French seem upon their final errand, as far as Paris is concerned—Tell me how you take to my Ode now that you have it—Karl Blind's article is good. Von Sybel's a professorial diversion—one smells the cognac of victory Still I like him and note in him curiously where the German mind, broad though it is, flattens The French points up. That the two should not be in harmony is our desperate look out Adieu, my dear Fred—Your loving

GEORGE MEREDITH

To Captain Maxse

Box Hill, Dorking, Feb 27, 1871

MY DEAR FRED,—. Your speech reads capitally. I heard from Harrison at a dinner some time back that you spoke well at the London meeting, but some one told me that you obeyed a voice bidding you 'cut it short' Is it the fact?

Things are saddening enough in France But I do not remember the gloomy forecasts following the Wars of Napoleon I? The Germans have retaliated in coin They too must pay for it. These developments only prove that our speculations were more advanced than

sensitive, and I likewise have thought myself here and there roughly used by you. But I pardoned the offending minute when the hour had struck, and never thought of identifying the offence with my friend. I chose to blame myself as the safer way of closing a slight wound. It seems that I have been roughening you for six months. When I last came over to you I was bright with the happiness of being with you and I remember I denounced (as I supposed I might do to a friend) a poem that struck me as worthless. I spoke like a man coming off a country road fasting. It may be too often my manner. I might well think my friend would not let it live with him, and that he knew my mind better than to allow a sense of variance to spring from such differences in open talk. Possibly a nature that I am proud to know never ceases in its growth is passing now through some delicate stage which finds me importunate or you feel that you have outstripped me, and are tempted to rank me with the vulgar. I can bring a thousand excuses for a letter that I have read often to assure myself it is among the things which are but arrive only at the conclusion I have named. We will see one another as little as we can for two or three years, and by and by may come together again naturally. And if not you will know I am glad of the old time am always proud of you always heart in heart with you on all the great issues of our life and in all that concerns your health and fortunes. I suffer too much to day to desire that any explanation should restore us to our past footing. Almost I am tempted to hope that I am quite valueless to you for as I am not a man to send such a letter as you have just written to me without deeply weighing every word in it and probable signification of its burden to the reader, or without weighing my feelings well against my friends, so I am not the man to receive one without

than for the well-being of men in the mass I am susceptible of admiration of their sterling qualities, holding nevertheless that they will repent of the present selfish restriction of their views—Rage at me, Fred! It is better to bend the knee to Wisdom than march in the chorusing ranks of the partizans.—I think with pain that the Germans enter Paris this very day! But the City is not a 'holy City' for me The astonishing delusion which makes Frenchmen think it so is one proof of rudderless brains Morley is not 'German' He agrees with me that it would have been a silly madness to create a terrible and a justly wrathful enemy for ourselves (looking to the origin of this war), on the chance of securing a frenzied, fantastical ally. So will you in time. Generous sympathies hold you spell-bound—Your ever loving

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To ——.

Box Hill, March 23, 1871.

MY DEAR —,—I will answer as plainly as you have written. I cannot but be shocked and grieved to think of the effect my manner of speaking has had in clashing with your 'opinions, ideas, and likings' But that this should prompt you to tell me that it makes my society seem baneful to you; and that only with me do you suffer the consciousness that you fail to get new strength, and that your complaint of me is not captious because I am the only friend who has ever caused you to complain—these are accusations which point in one direction, that is, to the end of our intimacy. You consent to say that upon the larger matters we are one I have thought so, and have considered the minor differences too small to dwell on, the possible expression of them by one or the other of us too mean a subject for the preciousness of friendship in our short life to brood on. For I am

enough I know that when I was a lad it would have made me jump like the French statue of Freedom on the column of the Bastille The trip you propose looks promising As to Vienna you are quite aware of my objections to your going there Still if you give me your word to behave honourably I shall not oppose your going Dr Sana's last address in Vienna was No 5 Kleeblatt gasse near the Graben I am sure he would be delighted to see you but whether he is in Vienna now I cannot tell Captain Brackenbury lives in England He was 'Times' Correspondent with the army of Prince Frederick Charles from Orleans to Le Mans If you see Dr Sana perhaps he will take you round the beautiful Hollenthal and up the Schneeberg as he did me and it would be capital fun for you The Schneeberg is about eight hours from Vienna (that is you will be near the Chalets in that time) Go to the Belvedere at Vienna the pictures are notable there are superb Titans The hotel Stadt Frankfort has good cookery and if you mount to the third floor is not dear It is close to the Graben and is therefore the most central place you could find though a little dearer than some of the suburb hotels which are however dirty I am told —But here is your Aunt Sarah inviting you to Dauphiné again What do you say ? It rests with you to decide upon your course At any rate write to her —On the 10th your Mama presented us with a little girl so besides a brother you have now a sister and I hope no more Mother and babe are in excellent condition I think I shall be at Stuttgart some time in August This is not certain it depends on supplies but I want very much to see you and shall do my utmost to come —Your loving father GEORGE MEREDITH

determining to abandon a position that has exposed me to be wounded. What you have permitted yourself to write, and I to quote from you, cuts friendship to the ground. That I should be the only one of your friends ever to have done you harm, is not a nice distinction to reflect on. But I think I have said enough. I have answered you plainly and fully, and as to a sane man master of the meaning of his words and meaning exactly what they commonly convey—I am ever yours faithfully and warmly,

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Arthur G. Meredith.

GARRICK CLUB, June 12, 1871

MY DEAR ARTHUR,—The enclosed letter will introduce you to a lady who is the mother of (I met him at Mr. Benecke's at Mickleham, three days before the declaration of war last year) a Lieutenant von Schweizerbarth, a very gallant young officer. I have the letter from his brother, and I wish you to know him, from what I saw of him he is a gentleman, and I shall be glad to hear that you have made his acquaintance. He was, I believe, in all the chief actions and battles of the Wurtemberg army, and before Paris, and fought at Le Bourget. He constantly sent communications to his mother during the progress of the war, and these were forwarded to Mickleham and were singularly modest and very interesting. Let me know whether you have seen him when you next write.

To-morrow is your birthday, my dear boy, and we all wish you happiness. I put down £2 as a tip to you, and you will receive £10 out of my money order to Professor Zeller for your journey either on the Danube or where you will. Out of this £12 I suppose you will find

put it in one word, the character of your opposition is impatience Adieu—I love you and am yours

GEORGE M

To William Hardman

Box Hill, Nov 2 (1871)

DEAREST TUCK—Our letters have crossed Yours has given me great pleasure The hand of the workman is inspired by praise and I know that you and the un purchaseable D'Trois never give it but honestly

It struck me that a perusal of the book¹ without enforced pauses might lead you to see that the conception was full and good and was honestly worked out I resisted every temptation to produce great and startling effects (after the scene of the Statue which was permissible in art as coming from a boy and coloured by a boy's wonder)

Note as you read, the gradual changes of the growing Harry in his manner of regarding his father and the world I have carried it so far as to make him perhaps dull towards adolescence and young manhood except to one studying the narrative—as in the scenes with Dr Julius Such effects are deadly when appearing in a serial issue I was hero and there hand tied too by gentlemanly feeling in relation to the reigning Royal Hou o sweet Tory Tuck ! or I should (and did on paper) have launched out The Speech at the City Banquet would have satisfied a Communist Red originally And I had planned startling doings for the season of the Grand Parade But I constrained myself I suppose I am unlucky for I hear the novel does not move It is confounded by Mudie with the quantity coming out

Let me hear of your address at Horsham

Shall you have your Gold Barge on the Mole to float

¹ *The Adventures of Harry Richmond*

To Arthur Cecil Blunt.

Box Hill, Dorking, July 4, 1871.

MY DEAR BLUNT,—Would it suit you as well to come on Saturday week? Some one makes a point of asking me to leave home on Sunday, and it strikes me that wet weather on this small and (except in babies) barren crib would act evilly on your nervous system. But, as I want you to come to walk you over these hills, decide positively for this Saturday if you are engaged for the following Saturday. Now this is plain. In any case prepare to tramp, fair or foul. And write to me—Your faithful

GEORGE MEREDITH

To Captain Maase

Box Hill, Dorking, July 11, 1871

MY DEAR FRED,—Willie is delighted with his toy, and all day long we hear shots and may see men transformed into women in a jiffy—to the mockery of the actual!—Will your poet's dreams ever bring us to the happy state of toys, that one crack in the eye may turn a hairy beast into a lovely beauty? You quote your poets, Fred, and expect them to perform just similar prodigies. Not what should be, but what can, as a step thereunto, is the reasonable aim. Nor will any of your pop-guns pelleted with uncompromising decisions affect much the existing state of things, though they will, I often fear, wear you out before your time. You do well, and even nobly, but you are one half wrong, for you go against nature, and nature says that to work soundly the creature must be in that state of contentment to which philosophy points you and poetry elevates you. You deny to man the right to be in this state while there is one miserable upon the earth, and you deny to the little ones peace in their infancy because of the existence of error. To

To Tom Taylor

Box Hill, DORKING Nov 18 1871

MY DEAR TOM—How I envy you the new subject you have chosen!¹ It has been ringing through me all the morning I feel like a man who has been introduced to the beautiful woman of a friend and found her in comparable, made for him himself and all he can do is to cry out in honesty—take warning if you don't espouse her within a fortnight and further if even then you don't do justice to her, positive and spiritual I feel myself released from the obligation to respect your claims I will challenge your reputation and I will beat her forth with in contempt of you

Why not first write the story, and then dramatize it? It would make as lovely a story as striking a drama For the latter it has every splendid and noble quality Oh! you happy fellow But be worthy of your luck Let nothing delay you—I repeat my first warning

What I just fear is that you will make the brother a villain Give him some higher ground of action, drop villainy There is here a chance of lending the theme a touch of old tragedy of the classic idea For this purpose of course you must heighten the hero's character and have him to be more than a simple captain of horse Jacobitism could hardly inspire him the sense of fealty might, and it might give occasion to put stress on the ancient notion of loyal sentiment to a race in a young man's heart—Inherited The brother then, standing for law, order, and the like might think the State had reason to dread this youth The sister would take the woman's view Then you have the three in a perfect triangle fit for your best powers—or mine

¹ Refers to Tom Taylor's play *Lad, Clancarty or Wedded an' Woed* first produced at the Royal Olympic Theatre March 9 1874

down to Kingston in ? If so, I should like to accompany you. I have often desired to eat a swan on board, and see my countrymen kneeling on the tow-path as the procession goes by.

We have decided to enlarge our cottage, if the walls will stand it, and then we shall have a spare bedroom for friends, and you will visit us. Even now—we have hardly the courage to suggest it—you could have our room at the Burford Inn, and pass a day or two in this region, walking about as in the period when you mooned musically over the tantalizing siege. Reply to this point at your leisure—Do you think that Shirley Brooks¹ would care to read Richmond ? I don't know his address in Regent's Park.

The babes are well. Willie Godson has arrived at the stage of younker, and in him our dwelling has to rejoice that it possesses all in one, a perpetually rolling barrel, an incessant trumpet, a fife indifferently performed upon, a door creaking to every wind, a questioning machine, a hive of bees gone mad in the solstice and mistaking our ears for honey-bells—add on a cat, or its gut, striving after melody untaught. When haply I want to finish a last volume by sending a troublesome old gentleman to Bedlam, I shall bring the Younker on the scene, who will finish him quickly.

Marie Eveleen has shown a taste for dancing. I gave her inadvertently a first lesson, and am now her marked victim. She will have me, and I have to dance her, and sing her, and trot about the room until, I assure you, half an hour of it is equal to as much of dumb-bells.

She was Jenner-ated last week, and has taken well, is a new woman. Adieu—My love to you all, and I am ever your affectionate

G. M.

¹ Then editing *Punch*

to take to political writing' I reply that it demands special study He insists that I have only to give my genuine convictions I admit the novelty in newspaper writing but urge its insufficiency 'Not at all says he I am to be allowed to produce one vol novels on Questions of the Day Morley is quoted as being utterly of his opinion I propose to him an Opera libretto to popularise the Democratic movement and bring our chief personages before the eyes of the nobility O—— in love with the Princess L—— meditates the enlèvement of the lady that he may breed Radicals from Royalty delivers idea in ballad B—— impressionable to poetry and music is half won, but checked by religious sentiment —Ballad—The Waverer

Fred savagely Good God! How you can spout buffoonery in times like these!

Pathetic ballad by M In times like these'

The poor fellow danced with disgust He is fast assombrissant tout entier

Your article on Byron admirable nothing so good yet written of him and from the highest view I confessed to Fred that if I could write like that I would write more prose He groaned He has a private chamber of groans

GEORGE MEREDITH

PS—I sent Greenwood a review of an imaginary vol of poems Armageddon etc dedicated to Dr Cumming of Scotland The wretch posted proofs but his courage seems to have failed him

To Arthur G. Meredith

Box Hill Dorking
ENGLAND Dec 16 1871

MY DEAR ARTHUR,—Give my warmest regards to Florrie when you arrive at Heidelberg I think it

The above only to throw you a modest hint from your hasty outline.—Ever lovingly yours,

GEORGE MEREDITH

To John Morley.

Box Hill, Dec 7, 1871

MY DEAREST M,— Oh Heavens! what treachery, I heard of it on Sunday at Effingham Hill. And without consulting me! One comfort is, you haven't a tree on the Estate—not a shrub¹ Why, I know the house. I inspected it—I rejected it long before you had an idea of it! But I confess I'm jealous now you have really gone and made it your own

Now to business—I have a Grand Ode to France—called simply 'France 1870': from my point of view of sympathy and philosophy; which I think is ours. Latterly I have felt poetically weakened by the pressure of philosophical reflection, but this is going, and a fuller strength comes of it, for I believe I am within the shadow of the Truth, and as it's my nature to sing I may now do well. The amount of space will possibly be 4 or 4½ pages Do not print it too close I will send it on Monday or Tuesday next, and I should wish you to forward a proof to Garrison as well as to me, that I may have his opinion on it, if he will be so condescending as to give it, with possible suggestions, before the hour for returning to printer—Let me hear from you that you will take it. I can say that it's worth a place, but there should not be delay in outing with it If you won't I must, and O my poor purse!

Fred as usual He declares he knows a lady—a great novel-reader—who finds 'Harry Richmond' quite unintelligible in parts. He advises me in these serious times

¹ Refers to Mr Morley having taken Pitfield—a white house standing on the south side of the Hogsback on the road near Puttenham and midway between Guildford and Farnham

To Captain Maxse

Box Hill, Dorking March 21 1872

MY DEAR FRED — All thanks to you for your thoughtfulness about Arthur into whose future I wish to see a path. But it would be impossible to get him over to compete with a fair chance, within a couple of months, and I confess I shrink from the idea of his going to China. He is having a good, thorough education, and is observant and interested in European affairs, and to him the East would seem banishment and for what? There would be little chance of his rising I apprehend. Don't think me hard to please. I am very anxious about him. Should you have further information in praise of this service I should like to hear it but I shudder at the thought of losing sight of the boy altogether.

The behaviour of the House of Commons was filthy. They are at red heat of loyalty, and I am persuaded that men anxious to serve the public would be wiser minded in timing their motions. Think of it! — after the English have just seen a Republic overthrown by a Monarchy they are expected to listen with decency to a pair of avowed Republicans! — and their Prince only lately well out of a typhoid bed! It is asking too much of them.

I should have liked to go up to the lecture, but it involved leaving home for a night and work for a morning and I am hurrying a new performance. When it is printed send me a copy. I like the headings.

Millicent Maxse!

Hark at it!

Miss Millicent Maxse was fond of her Ma
And chanted her aristocratic tra la
In contempt of her stern democratic Papa
And to spite him she married a Markis—ha! ha!

It won't do It's horrid It dances on the m's hoydonly

remarkably kind of her to invite you—though I am sure you make your companionship worth having. I shall be delighted to have a letter from Heidelberg. The Odenwald in winter must be fine: not so suggestive of Ossian as a land of crag and mist, but with a grandeur of its own. As to Ossian and Homer, your choice represents a phase of thoughtful youth. Ossian's imagery is intangible. Homer's is all concrete. Homer's comes up from the heart of Nature. Ossian's is somewhat forced, and seems due to a sentimental habit and the imperiousness of sentiment in colouring all of its own hue. The Homeric battles, Councils and speeches are still as fresh as ever owing to the naturalness of the imagery, the vigour of the flow, the manly music of the lines. The death of Patroclus, the grieving of Achilles, are imperishable things; the parting of Hector and Andromache, the elderly Troy looking at Helen and other scenes—and observe, that all the characters are distinct, painted without effort, but with the sharp outline of life.—Of course you must make allowance for the ancient spirit. and the truth is, the modern tone (under the guise of a weird, primeval, mystical melody and system of verse) is what catches you. I am not at all sorry, and you have good examples—Napoleon was once in love with Ossian. It has the same effect on the young as ruins of castles and abbeys seen by moonlight. The more imaginative and the sensitive are sure to like him best, but there is not a doubt as to which is the greater poet. In fact you are of an age to like the minor song, and not quite to appreciate the great organ-notes I have known a period when I would rather have been reading Tennyson than Shakespeare. so you see you have an example. I wish I had time to write on—Your loving father,

GEORGE MEREDITH.

value is matter of rejoicing to me The Christian teaching is sound and good the ecclesiastical dogma is an instance of the poverty of humanity's mind hitherto and has often in its hideous fangs and claws shown whence we draw our descent—Don't think that the obscenities mentioned in the Bible do harm to children The Bible is outspoken upon facts and rightly It is because the world is pruriently and stupidly shamefaced that it cannot come in contact with the Bible without convulsions I agree with the Frommen that the book should be read out, for Society is a wanton hypocrite and I would accommodate her in nothing though for the principle of Society I hold that men should be ready to lay down their lives Belief in the religion has done and does this good to the young it floats them through the perilous sensual period when the animal appetites most need control and transmutation If you have not the belief set yourself to love virtue by understanding that it is your best guide both as to what is due to others and what is for your positive personal good If your mind honestly rejects it you must call on your mind to supply its place from your own resources Otherwise you will have only half done your work and that is always mischievous Pray attend to my words on this subject You know how Socrates loved Truth Virtue and Truth are one Look for the truth in everything and follow it and you will then be living justly before God Let nothing flout your sense of a Supreme Being and be certain that your understanding wavers whenever you chance to doubt that he leads to good We grow to good as surely as the plant grows to the light The school has only to look through history for a scientific assurance of it And do not lose the habit of praying to the unseen Divinity Prayer for worldly goods is worse than fruitless, but prayer for strength of soul is that

Marie suggests Violet, since you have an Olive Geraldine is charming. Leila, Gwendolen. Maxse will take anything but Millicent.—Emilia Maxse gets a better accent. Millicent avaunt! It's a proper parson's wife's name; it overflows with female priggery. You have to lift the nose to pronounce it.

I am glad you take to Davis. We have a great regard for her, and know her to be a single-minded brave old woman—Yours ever,

GEORGE MEREDITH

To Arthur G. Meredith

Box Hill, Dorking, Surrey,
England, April 25, 1872

MY DEAR ARTHUR,—. . . Strong friendships and inter-communications with foreigners will refresh your life in this island, and the Germans are solid. Stick to a people not at the mercy of their impulses, and besides a people with so fine a literature must be worthy of love.—Captain Maxse wrote to me the other day about an examination in the Foreign Office for the post of Chinese interpreter—for you if successful to go out to China with a salary of £200 per annum and learn the Chinese tongue of li-ro and fo-ki. I declined it: I hope I was right. I felt sure that it would be repugnant to you to spend your life in China, where the climate is hard, society horrid, life scarcely (to my thought) endurable. Perhaps you might have chosen Japan. But it would have been for very many years perpetual banishment. Let me hear what you think of it.—Study Cicero carefully. He is a fine moralist, a friend of scholars, a splendid trainer for a public life of any serious and exalted ambition—What you say of our religion is what thoughtful men feel: and that you at the same time can recognise its moral

To Frederick Greenwood¹

Box Hill, Jan. 1 1873

MY DEAR GREENWOOD—Open your heart a minute to receive a greeting of the New Year from me. May you fight as victoriously—bravely you always will—this year as last! May suppressed gout go limping on the other side of the river! May you be touched with the wand of wisdom to throw off your one blindness and see the virtues of my pen as with a flash of revelation!

By the way I am having some fun in the Graphic and might by and by turn the Dialogues to good purpose but I fear the grave commercial men sitting on it won't stand me long. Glance at next number, if it should come under your eye. Do let us meet for an evening this month? Fitzjames Stephen's articles are fine out hitting and have judicial good sense. They are the prosœ of Carlyle's doctrines valuable profitable, but to me, though I take their smashing force just not conclusive enough to make me anxious to hear the rejoinder. It is of great importance that what he says should be said. His side of the case has hitherto been woefully dumb—unable to supply an athlete. So bold and able a writer will set a balance. Only guard against a certain sombrely prognosticating tone that he has—as in the sermon on New Year's Eve. Opposed to the artificial cheerfulness of the Journals it's like starlight after pantomime fires. But it gives the Pall Mall by degrees a Mr. Toobad twang.

Some one assured me that George Smith had yielded

¹ Author and journalist originator and publisher of the *Pall Mall Gazette*. When Yates Thompson purchased this and turned it into a Liberal organ Greenwood and other members of the staff formed the *Commonweal*.

passion of the soul which catches the gift it seeks—
Your loving father, GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Captain Maxse

Box Hill, July 2, 1872

MY DEAR FRED,—. . As to the Century Club supper, I thank you I return you the paper. The Club should not sup until it has deliberated a century before the act. Supping on any occasion is doubtful wisdom, but when you do, it should be like sinning, profuse—a good go in at it, not 'inexpensive.' Really, Fred, what are you coming to! I supped once with a damsel on ale, cheese and onions And what are you going to commemorate? You are going to make speeches! If there is one thing to make any meal indigestible, it's spouting. My neighbour's wretched crudities which I'm to bolt, good Lord!—The lighting of the Aquarium, where one may see the fish that won't come to the plate, is simply barbarous. I am certain it was at your suggestion that wines were excluded I'm persuaded too that you're in error in supposing you belong to this Century, and it's only by courtesy the fellows of it don't tell you so; it's the next you belong to, and you will find it out; and you were not made for a Club, but for mankind, so you see you're wrong all round, and you will be like a member of the Aquarium out of water there. Don't go. Come to me that day—Your unrefreshed GEORGE M.

PS.—Does this 'Supper' mean 'Dinner' at a reasonable hour?—say. And is there a chance of no Speechification? And might I have time to inspect the Aquarium quietly by coming? And dress anyhow?

by George Smith, who is (as he always is) very kind
about it—Your faithful

GEORGE MEREDITH

To John Morley

Box Hill, Dorking May 22 1874

MY DEAR MORLEY,—I thank you very much for stepping over the obstruction for our mutual convenience in the matter of Beauchamp Greenwood and Maxse told me that the work pleased you I need scarcely assure you that I look upon your appreciation of my labour as a good reward of it I write for you and men like you Consequently when the greater paymaster failed me I hoped the work might be accepted where it would be more suitably accommodated feeling quite certain that you would allow nothing to stand in the way of your estimation of it on its merits Your reluctance to undertake the burden of so lengthy a production I cannot but think reasonable and I gladly meet your kind proposal that I should cut it short as much as I can, without endangering the arteries I will get the MS from George Smith immediately and do my utmost upon it It strikes me that the parts to lop will be the letters a portion of the Visit to Normandy, the heavier of the electioneering passages, introductory paragraphs to chapters and dialogues *passim* that may be considered not vital to the central idea That which may be stated to be the personal abnegation coming in spite of errors here and there (and as it were in spite of the man himself) of a noble devotion to politics from the roots up, I think I can retain uninjured—possibly improved by the exclusion of a host of my own reflections At any rate they can be reprinted subsequently Chapman will buy the book for the 3 vol issue It rests with me that this should be brought about I will take the liberty to let

his part in the P. M. to Spottiswoode: not true, I hope?

I have looked at Morris's poem 'Enough for love,'— 'Love is enough,' I mean Have you? I looked away. The look was enough Our public seems to possess the fearful art of insensibly castrating its favourites. The songs are of the species of Fitzball's Gossamer Tree charming in melody, but there is no such thing as a gossamer tree. I hope when Swinburne publishes his 'Tristram' you will review him Take him at his best he is by far the best—finest poet, truest artist—of the young lot—when he refrains from pointing a hand at the genitals. And I trust he has done so this time I never see him, and have to imagine that he has taken offence—without a formal editorial letter to tell me of it, as in a famous case known to us All states of life have their privileges, and mine is to be behind the scenes of many illustrious and ringing names, and to laugh How truly wise is so and so! I hear, and I bow. The aim of the pretenders must be but to have this homage of the public, and who would rob them of it because he happens to be behind them on the stage and peruses a dead blank instead of the pretty picture confronting the pensive? I would run on, but you are a busy man. If we can't meet, I will invite myself to you for the evening I hope your daughter still improves—From your loving

GEORGE MEREDITH

To Frederick Greenwood

Box Hill, Dorking, March 12, 1874

My DEAR GREENWOOD,—I should like to review 'Spain and the Spaniards' of Azamar Batuk; and also 'Yu-Pe-Ya's Lute' by Mrs Webster, if I see stuff in it Will you leave them out for me? I want work My poor 'Beauchamp' is not thought good for the market

believed in by any class except when he vexes his own and it is then to be hated At the same time the mild spirit of a prosperous middle class that is not extremely alarmed, is shown to be above persecuting so that the unfortunate young man is in danger of being thought dull save by those who can enter his idea of the advancement of Humanity and his passion for it In this he is a type And I think his History a picture of the time —taking its mental action and material ease and in difference, to be a necessary element of the picture

But I am afraid all this will not sound hopeful to you in the interests of an American publisher, if it should be on behalf of one that you do me the honour to address me

I find myself writing to you on a matter of business I am indebted to your lectures for support and have often wished to thank you for them I beg you to pardon the liberty I take in doing so—I am, dear sir,
yours most faithfully,

GEORGE MEREDITH

To John Morley

Box Hill Dorking July 14 1874

MY DEAR MORLEY,—Since you are inclined generously to trust to me to cut the Novel short, I promise you that it shall be done to your satisfaction, as to quantity. The mutilation does me no hurt but hitherto I have merely looked at it to see that it could be done —but with shudders to think how much more there was to do ! The central portion, I fear must be cut to pieces, condensed re written—I would have begun upon the MS immediately but Chapman had given me to suppose that you were very anxious for space for critical and attractive articles—I fancied there was no hurry —To day I post 3 chapters, which I fancy will come within the pages you number for me The excisions are not

you know to what amount, and when, the task of excision has been performed.

My little ones, I am glad to say, are well, and so is my wife, whom I join in sending her compliments and regards to Mrs. Morley

Let me add that I await the continuation of the essay on Compromise with some impatience —I am your obliged and faithful

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Moncure D. Conway.

Box Hill, Dorking, June 18, 1874

DEAR SIR,—I have been away from home, and I regret very much that your letter of the 29th May should have remained unanswered up to this date

I am engaged in cutting down my novel for the 'Fortnightly Review.' The task is hard, for I have at least to excise a third of my work, which appears to be a full three-vols measure Supposing that I accomplish it to the satisfaction of the Editor, the first chapters will be published in the Septr number, as far as I can calculate. Would it be of use to you to have early serial sheets ?

I feel bound to warn you of the nature of my work. It is not likely to please the greater number of readers Mr George Smith (of Smith, Elder & Co) could not take it for the 'Cornhill Magazine.' It is philosophical-political, with no powerful stream of adventure an attempt to show the forces round a young man of the present day, in England, who would move them, and finds them utterly solid, though it is seen in the end that he does not altogether fail, has not lived quite in vain. Of course, this is done in the concrete A certain drama of self-conquest is gone through, for the hero is not perfect He is born of the upper class, and is scarcely

believed in by any class except when he vexes his own and it is then to be hated At the same time the mild spirit of a prosperous middle class, that is not extremely alarmed, is shown to be above persecuting, so that the unfortunate young man is in danger of being thought dull save by those who can enter his idea of the advancement of Humanity and his passion for it In this he is a type And I think his History a picture of the time —taking its mental action and material ease and indifference, to be a necessary element of the picture

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I will take care that Virtue prints the next chapter early so that, if you will be so good as to offer it I may have your counsel anent the paragraph

Did I speak to you of Morison's article? It abounded in cleverness it threw me over and silenced me—but is it just to be writing so decisively unhopefully? Many of his illustrations are excellent It is at any rate admirable journalism—I am yours very faithfully

GEOERGE MEREDITH

To Captain Maxse

Box Hill August 5 1874

MY DEAR FRED—Probably you are in strong sunshine Here we have a chilly day a shrouded sky half a suspicion of light now and then a bit of a breeze that has puffed spasmodic life into the yachts at Cowes and shakes the rain from our junipers The fine weather has become a Christian penitent and makes everybody unhappy around her—How I long to be with you! I am afraid that the doing of justice to Beauchamp and other work I have will nail me down (a coffiny phrase!) or rather I am fearing it for I still look forward with a bit of hope

On Sunday White arrived in attendance upon Mr Jacob Homburg¹ of whom we are all very fond He is a nice little fellow with an addiction to hunting rabbits that I must cure him of, and a passion for the kitchen, due to the soft influences of your cook probably incurable Already he has taken to his new home, follows me well and seems to like his quarters The exception to his good conduct is that he refuses biscuit and thinks of standing out for meat pure and simple

You have seen the papers and meditated upon the Beecher Tilton scandal Guilty or not there is a sickly snuffiness about the religious fry that makes the tale of

¹ A dachshound the gift of Captain Maxse

so numerous here as they will be subsequently to the Venetian scenes. These also I shall be able to cut down a little. Remember that I despatch the sheets to Virtue because it is your wish: I am not anxious to begin—I will try my hand at a paragraph or two of Prologue. I see that it is wanted It is difficult If I had but temporary command of your style I should not fear.

The latest portion 'On Compromise' is very good indeed.—Are the instances a trifle over-familiar for the dignity of the Essay? They at least give your meaning clearly and bring them home—are likely to do downright service. For that purpose it will not do to stand much aloof—among the sons of Hengist I have just returned from Uckfield, where his descendants are in the majority, though they would assume Horsa to be his wife.—Morison's 'Impossible French Republic' strikes one as overwhelmingly true—as it is powerful.

To John Morley.

Box Hill, July 23, 1874

MY DEAR MORLEY,—I find I can say better what should be said of Beauchamp in a paragraph at the head of the 4th chapter—I am very shy of prefaces, and by introducing my one or two remarks incidentally I hope to escape from a tone that seems to avoid the apology only by some loftiness—or the reverse. I am afraid it would not be I who could put the intermediate touch Conception rarely fails me, though ability does, and I can barely conceive of its being done in the proper tone—I own that you might do it for one of your own works: but for a piece of fiction having a serious aim, and before a public that scorns the serious in fiction, and whose wits, are chiefly trained to detect pretension, it is more than commonly difficult.

of a tour, or what your proposition is and what supposing we do not meet upon the date you name your aim is likely to be Whither you will go, and for how long and which way homeward—I have not abandoned the prospect of meeting you somewhere but at this instant (and it is the reason why I did not write to you by return of post) I do not see my way out of the encircling whirr of work—Marie and I rejoice that you should be feeling better and condescending to repose—a good sign of itself

Adieu, my dear Fred Write soon and I will reply Tell me your scheme I will come if I can and meet you, if it doesn't preclude walking somewhat Nuremberg I have never seen and much want to By what date is it imperative for you to be in England?—Your loving

GEORGE MEREDITH

To John Morley

Box Hill August 10 1871

MY DEAR MORLEY —Pardon me if I have been causing anxiety to the Editorial bosom Each day that I keep back my MS I feel capable of cutting out more and more and for the present number the more the better, for it will be as well to get over the Venetian scenes in this number as nearly as possible—according to the amount of space you can give me The chapters are short—You will see that the 2nd para of Chapter 4 is composed of the prefatory observations I am quite ready to defer to your judgment if you object to them or to the way in which they are done —To morrow morning I send several chapters on to Virtue from Chapman's and very shortly you shall have a vol in advance—I need hardly say how glad I am that you approve of it so far Maxse writes from Carlsbad that he thinks the beginning 'excellent,' but the public and press may think differently

their fornications and adulteries absolutely repulsive to read of, and but for the feeding of the reptile sarcasm in our bosoms, it would disgust one more than a chronicle of the amours of costermongers.

If Austria permits to you the 'Fortnightly,' you will have seen that Beauchamp has made a start. It is a singularly fine number.

Do you know I have a great liking for being in Austria, and if I come I would propose a route something like this: to be at Nuremberg about the 22nd (I cannot be off before the 20th): to proceed to Ratisbon, and by steamer to Linz and Passau: thence quickly to the Salzkammergut, and by any route you like to Tyrol and Lienz, for a few days among the dolomites' valleys. then by rail to Verona and by the North Italian lakes homeward anyhow—Would such a scheme please you, with some small amount of knapsack walking? Tell me. For walking is the thing I must have, or it will be waste of time and money for me Up at four a m , a walk to breakfast, a walk to dinner, a stroll, and then early to the couch—Latterly I have been rising here at half-past five, and have enjoyed the tonic morning air immensely, yet more the fresh loveliness of the downs and fields, the velvet shadows, sharp and thin, and the exquisite sky. This morning there was little of that, however The weather seems to be making up for the jolly squalls and the gale we had crossing to Cherbourg once Changes have come since then! Where 's the Susan? Where 's the Grebe?—By the way, Betty Vulliamy would like to know whether you are a Good Templar, and if not whether you are willing to become one. I don't know the nature of the rites of initiation

So spins the world away.—I would not have you write, because it 's better for your health's sake that you should not, but you may jot down what you think of my plan

champ' I am at work cutting down, which will necessitate some amount of fresh writing Chapman urges me for copy, so that he may have an advance lot to forward to America for pay, otherwise he won't get the same, so I am bound to go on with my work, and that fact, besides considerations of the purse, seems to forewarn me I am doomed to remain in harness I fear so I cannot say at present but the outlook is bad I may be able in Sept to accomplish a cheap trip of a fortnight to my wife's sister in Dauphiny, for a breath of mountain air Switzerland gets dim as Leith Hill behind the raincloud —It is an immense relief and joy to me to think of the chance of your recovery Perhaps the waters do something but the seclusion from work and nervous worry is the main secret, I fancy Next year, if things are favourable with me, I might try Carlsbad myself Obtain the best general information as to the waters, and let me know how they operate —By the way, have you read Swinburne's 'Bothwell'? I am afraid it's going to be allowed to sink because of its size and no doubt there is too much of it, but you at least are one of those who should read and support it —Morley finishes 'Compromise, very good and bold work that cannot but be beneficial I presume that Morrison on the 'Prospects of the Republic in France' did not please you The Positivists he tells me are howling still It was well written I am afraid it contains more truth than we care to admit, though none can deny to Gambetta very honourable leadership of late I have seen one 'Lanterne' Hum And read Rochefort's Fortnightly Article Have you? Poor stuff —We want from him an orderly narrative done in a certain grave pitch of tone, not carping criticisms of other men's work

I hope to be hearing from you to-morrow, when I may have something to reply to, so I will hold this from the

For your sake as well as mine I hope not M confesses to feeling very much improved in tone. He wishes me to meet him at the Bel Alp on the 20th. I do not see that it is possible. I have the restless feeling for the mountains as actively as ever, but neither time nor purse.— Morison should be coming to me for a day or two, and if he does not I shall fear that things are going ill at Pit-field. The conclusion of 'Compromise' gives me a bold, healthful, high-reaching Essay, practically a guide to turn to when the heart is weaker than the eye is blind. If, either owing to the casuistry pertaining to the subject, or to the desire for directly applying your meaning, you have missed the philosophical altitudes you love better (I understand Morison to hint at this), you have at least said what no one else dares or can say. I shall re-read it — Let me add that now and then I have thought you less careful in your style than commonly. It has the good swing, but there are dissonances. That is little, but there are at the same time phrases running with sentences that are cast in a tone too purely argumentative for that proper to the essay showing as it were the want of absolute compression of your own thought in awaiting the objections of an opponent, double-stating it — I do not quarrel with what I like well, but what I like I wish to see perfect, and I am sure you will overlook a critical habit in me — Your most faithful

GEORGE MEREDITH

To Captain Maxse.

Box Hill, August 10, 1874

MY DEAR FRED,—Hail, rain, thunder, lightning:— have you anything like this at Carlsbad? This is our daily entertainment, and I don't dislike it, for it gives fine scenery.—I am glad you like the opening of ' Beau-

their distinctions) High Church One may be high and not see far And now good night, Fred Write from Bel Alp —Where you also will be high and not see so far as me I dare say —Your envious

GEORGE M

To Captain Maxse

Box Hill DOREING Sept 3 1874

MY DEAR FRED,—I am reminded by Jacob von Homburg that you pass through Geneva on the 5th and there is just time for me to despatch you a greeting I know the disappointment of not getting a letter when one calls at a foreign post office —Wind S E with rain For a week we have had fine S W skies yesterday was quite wonderful with scaling clouds I went up the hill with Will and his mother and sister (Jacob of course) and we flew a kite and dreamed It was on the whole as good as Switzerland while it lasted, but it was not the shaking up of Alpine walks and the freshening of mountain air This is what I want and find I certainly can't get before next year The more I look at Beauchamp the more I see that the work must be almost redone—at least to suit my taste —Tyndall's Belfast address you have seen no doubt It has roused the Clergy Fred *They* warned away from science? *They* excluded from the chief works of God and told to confine themselves to the field of the emotions! They affirm that Tyndall is an atheist and would dare to say he is already damned if the age were in a mood to hear that language The man or the country that fights priestcraft and priests is to my mind striking deeper for freedom than can be struck anywhere at present I foresee a perilous struggle with them So far I am heartily with Bismarck —I want you to note for me what sort of weather you have had on the days when I recorded our weather here I am noting as far

post for 24 hours. Jacob sits at my feet, and is my constant companion—a dear little fellow.

Aug. 11—Your letter just come You have not yet received mine dated the 4th, and to which I calculated getting yours of this morning for an answer—Adieu. I will write again—Your loving

GEORGE M.

To Captain Maxse

Box Hill, August 15, 1874

MY DEAR FRED,—I write so that you may not be disappointed of a letter at Meyringen, and good morning to you on your way to the Bel Alp! I am finishing a Poem, 'The Nuptials of Attila'—about forty pages: Jacob at my foot, an accustomed pigeon on the window-sill, bees below humming over some droppings of honeycomb just taken from them This is pastoral and should content me, yet I wish I were with you, in sight of the Alps Zurich I don't much care for, yet to be at Zurich would enrapture me—Why should you return!—Now I look at my pigeon fronting me, I remark that he is amazingly like a parson He is on one leg, asleep, his beak in breast, all his feathers oddly ruffled to swell his size, and an eye turned on me like the eye of Falstaff heeling over with excess of Sherris Say, a Bishop—When I was staying with my wife's sister last June we dined one evening with the rector of the place He said to me: 'Do you think it true that there is a portrait of Jesus Christ extant?'—'Of Nazareth?' said I. He blinked faintly like my sleepy pigeon. 'Certainly of Nazareth'—'Oh! no, then,' said I. 'But it is affirmed that there is an authentic portrait of the Virgin his Mother.' 'Could one trust it?' he asked me with a supplication in the tone. 'Decidedly not,' said I He was (to make use of one of

comes in the way of my re reading it immediately—thanks to your article and another (yours it struck me) in the Pall Mall—I feel to the writer as we used to towards our big boy champion against the bullies at school that is, I admire believe in him feel that it is my fight, but can aid only very little—by gesticulation chiefly He is a splendid fellow Hitherto we have pined for one who should unite profound scholarship and cunning of fence I like his unhastening equability of tone I am near the end of the 1st volume, and long to get to the summing up—You did well by 'Bothwell' in 'Macmillan' I spoke of the article to the more than Scotchman his partner¹—the coarser bran or pure porridge Scotchman

Hegh don t ye know the writer of it? said he, and scotched your name—The other night I saw Irving in Hamlet, a great pleasure that I should like to hear of your having He listened to my criticism next day and no doubt I thought the better of his Hamlet afterwards but it is good acting —Your ever faithful

GEORGE MEREDITH

I remember—I had certain things to say of Mill upon Nature but must defer it I rejoice that you speak with regret of the weak spot elsewhere

To Frederick Greenwood

Box Hill Dorking Last Day of 74

MY DEAR GREENWOOD—Though you are rapidly becoming insubstantial to me as well as elusive like the very spark in the burnt sheet of my rejected manuscript I believe in you still and will wish New Year's happiness to an Editor so deep in his retirement as to be but the animating spirit of a newspaper Do you ever think of —

¹ George Lillie Crask

as I can the general prevalence of the S. Westers at this period. Septr. is commonly a fine Swiss month, whether it shares our luck at all is what I want to learn. France, I find, has usually our weather in Spring, and not in Autumn.—I shall see you soon. The folly of your coming back affects me strangely. Necessity would have to pull hard to fetch me to these shores, had I choice of Switzerland or Italy Write when you return—and come here.

—Your loving

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To John Morley.

Box Hill, DORKING, Nov 19, 1874.

MY DEAR MORLEY,—I gave you your 'month of freedom from editorial cares,' thinking it might be wanted for a holiday on tough desk-work, then fearing that a personal affliction, to which I could not minister, urged you to keep aloof. I am very glad to have your letter When Maxse saw you before you started he thought you were looking ruddily well—chubbily: so writing at least agrees with you. Yours is the better way. Public life, if only one can keep up to the mark of it, and know when to abandon it, is the wholesomest. You get most wisdom out of it: and it is the only path to follow to know oneself. Hermit philosophers are soon seen following the fancy as much as infants, but it is not so pretty a fancy.—I assume that objections are not yet raised against Beauchamp, because I have not yet had a sneer from Chapman. As far as I have seen, the Weekly Commentators are disposed to leave it alone, and I would rather have them do so—Absolute re-writing I find to be my lamentable task for the whole of it!

¶ The Essay on Compromise was put in my hands the other day in Piccadilly. I hold it a brave good book to take counsel with The work on 'Supernatural Religion'

you will be back with the boys for their schooling before the further proofs require attention but I shall hear from you and the proofs shall fly to you wherever you are — Did you see in the Times a letter of a delicious Bishop reproving Auberon Herbert upon the subject of Prayer Assuring us, in large type that God answers it upon the example of the human physician to whom we cry for aid, and are answered The proof of a spiritual response from the instance of the material one is finely episcopal The Times printed no reply to my Lord Bishop — Your loving

GEORGE MEREDITH

To Frederick Jones

Box Hill Jan 23 1875

MY DEAR JONES — It s I who am the delinquent Marie will not touch the pen to tell it The truth is I am so tied down to work at this period that I cannot hope to spare two days for pleasure before the end of February Blame but pity me and that will bring you round to the right feeling Besides our Babsie is only just flinging off a catarrh and I feel threatened with it yet must drive my quill

Consider however you that the Birthdays occur on the 10th and 12th of next month Will you come on the 10th to celebrate Marie s ? Once you did Be that admirable man and wife again ! You will make us happy And then can be settled the time of our visit to you I have long been wishing to see you and make you know my sympathy for you in the blows that have struck you heavily through the year They have been a grief to us believe me

I do hope you will come on the 10th Write to me pardoning me and heaping anthracite on my head (a costly matter in these days) by the promise that in spite

me? Ever imagine how much an hour of you calls me up? Do you read a bit of Beauchamp? I have a portion of it under me to compress and rekindle, and words can't say what a dole of criticism from you (with an interjection or two on the right side) would do to animate the finish. Do you lunch at the Garrick? Sometimes I see you glowing through the bars of the Pall Mall, roguish as Holbein's Harry 8th Jester at Hampton Court, or awful as Eblis with the fire at his heart. But I see you only in brilliant dots, like a score of devil's music played to a dyspeptic at night, to haunt him for the remainder of his term, integral no more.

Let nonsense be no more. Men grow grave, Editors most of all. I am troubled about various outlooks for the country, and do hope you will be at work on the subject of a conscription—your own subject years back. Our stiff-necked people must pass under this yoke.

Some day I shall call for a talk of five minutes. Meantime I salute you with all my heart.

To Captain Maxse

Box Hill, Jan 13, 1875

MY DEAREST FRED,—Your letter struck like a shaft of sunlight into my bath yesterday morning, and the contents appear to me very good. Movement and bracing air—these are the specifics. I have such a vision of your pinewoods that they will henceforth be one of my points of attraction. How delightful to roam through them with your boys!—I assume that the little chaps picked up at once on landing.

Our frost broke up the night you started, and a rising wind made me think of you.

I doubt if there will be any fresh matter this month, Morley gave only two chapters last month. No doubt

and the ruins of our appointment fall in a heap on the next and down we shall go into the dark and unknown vast if we do not lay tight hold of the nearest branch, and swear—

All or nothing! I can't endure your coming for only a night and two bits of days a Thursday without head and a Friday without bottom Tell me that though all London should crave for you open mouthed you come on Wednesday week, not to leave us at least before Friday But don't be due anywhere till that week is done

Come on Wednesday in time for a French breakfast in the garden about $\frac{1}{2}$ past 11 You have no idea how nice it is We tried it on Sunday with three good men and an ancient Hock, and I assure you that staid and formal day danced to its end like an ecclesiastic that has received the promise of a bishopric Say then Wednesday week and here before $\frac{1}{2}$ past 11 Happily we shall have majestic July weather Write, bind thyself From me and mine to you and yours all sweet greetings!—Yours,

GEORGE MEREDITH

To John Morley

Box Hill, July 1 1875

MY DEAR MORLEY —We stipulate for you that we are not to expect you in soaking weather

Because (and here lies the sting of it only to be obliterated by our welcome of you) you come so rarely that we are anxious to make a great occasion of it great not grand and much radiancy is required of the heavens when that you do come Therefore should July continue to squeeze a sponge again postpone But if it promises fair on Tuesday tell me at what early hour (writing on Tuesday with a calculating eye aloft) I may go to the Station to meet you and bring you to

The Breakfast

of my breaches of faith you can be generous. Willie will be so happy to see Ethel He shall have a holiday for that day. Give my warmest regards to Mrs. Jones —dashed by no cynicism of your own . and to Miss Jones and my love to Bright-hair —Your faithfulest

GEORGE MEREDITH

To John Morley.

Box Hill, April 12, 1875

MY DEAR MORLEY,—Your letter written at Trier was a delightful surprise to me. On the Sunday following we imagined you at Rheims, gave you to the Sainted Joan for an hour, compared the wheels of your mind with the ceremonials of the Cathedral, and finally deposited you in Paris, where for your good health I trust you may even still be I am anxious to see you here, but this weather allows of no forecast of when. Let me hear of your return It would (weather permitting and your work) be pleasant to have your appreciation of some of the upper Frenchmen while it is new. I feel like the one who 'ploughs with pain his native lea.' I go nowhere, see, hear, know nothing.—Yes, I went to see Salvini on Friday Saturday gave the newspaper criticism, and after observing the true and only Othello, you should have read them! Faint, prim, pulling exceptions to this and that: Like political England they want peace—not to be disturbed. They harp on Othello's 'Tenderness.' Do you perceive much of it in reading the play ?—one of the finest in action of Shakespeare, lowest of the great plays in conception —Yours ever warmly,

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To John Morley

Box Hill, June 29, 1875.

MY DEAR MORLEY,—Most foul ! But postponements, as you justly remind me, destroy the integrity of men,

handled perfectly How unjust I was to the printed portion in the 'Fortnightly'! Or may one be pardoned for not having seen the fulness of the work there? I did not discredit you for style (excepting a point or two) but exactly for that which I find in the book—mastery of every note of that evasive heart, and a power of showing the Heroic coward complete in his contradictions To my mind it is—and it will be to me—one of the most precious of studies It is one of the wisest of books For such is the nature of Rousseau that his notes are the deepest and highest within the scale of philosophy, and the very lowest But (with an exception or two to be named when I meet you, and soon and here, I hope) you touch all equably, delicately filling, with volume where needful—I cannot exhaust my admiration I am at times electrified by companion ideas of my own— To me the study has a charm that flings off monotony Speaking critically for the multitude (in the manner of modern criticism) monotony is a character of the subject and the book wherefore it has not been popular And with reviewers 3 things present and one absent were required Competency of knowledge quick sympathy for the shifting marvellous creature your theme a comprehension of the mystery of what we are—and no prejudice The little g for G was turned on you heavily— But such a fate befalling a book like this should be consolation as to rewards for value, to novelists and pygmies

Can you by chance come to us next week? It will delight me infinitely I have to talk over Rousseau with you, much to say I made no marks but I will at whiles and meantime I remember enough to occupy us—Your
faithfullest

GEORGE MEREDITH

Mr John Dennis tells how sitting in the Garrick Club in the early hours of the morning Meredith told him he had

I wish I knew of conversible fellows to ask to meet you One can meet, I am told, remarkable characters, but the speechful, the reciprocating, the sunny and un-presumptuous, who speak from the healthy breast of that dear Mother of us, the Moment,—where are they to be found ?

I have looked, I forgot to tell you, at Tennyson's 'Queen Mary,' and I had great pleasure of my reading I saw no trace of power, but the stateliness, the fine tone, the high tone, of some passages, hit me hard Curiously too, in him, the prose is crisp, salient, excellent. The Songs, if we had not Shakespeare's to show what are not literary forcings to catch a theme to point a comparison, would do As it is, 'Milking the cow' smells of milking the brain Mary's 'Low-low' is an instance of public consciousness—before Victoria's people —But the work seems to me to be good, and how glad I am to have it of him !—Your faithful

GEORGE MEREDITH

To John Morley

Box Hill, August 12, 1875

MY DEAR MORLEY,—I must write now, though I have little time to give a faint sketch of what I have to say of 'Rousseau' It has moved me as few books have done I had but a poor knowledge, from never having read a compact history of this period when Wit, Science and Sentiment contended, and the latter, which was to fade before the other two, struck an unsound Age with the ring of the ultimate Truth Rousseau was the very key-note —You have handled him with consummate mastery : and none can know the trial you have sustained better than he who as I do penetrates to the man, hating this in him, warming to that, alternately, incessantly. But here is one of the most curious and one of the grandest problems of humanity, which you have

—Shall a man in grey declined
Seem the same for Rosalind ?
Yea though merely aged in mind
Is he worthy Rosalind ?
This in grave debate should bind
Parliaments and Rosalind
—Still if captious wayward blind
And the rest of t Rosalind
Should insist —if to her mind
(If she have one) Rosalind
Thinks me (if to thought inclined
Ever), I with Rosalind
(And I say it, having dined,
Slept and dreamed of Rosalind)
I will do my best and kind
Prove our audience, Rosalind !
Take these words for treaty signed
—No Orlando, Rosalind !
But a man with wrinkles lined,
Vows to read with Rosalind

To Frederick Greenwood

Box Hill, March 9 1876

MY DEAR GREENWOOD —Don't laugh at my simplicity
I m treating you as if you really meant to come And
who knows ? Faith has been rewarded and unfaith
astounded before now We have a fine South Wester
blowing, likely to hold on for some days Will you come
this Saturday early ?—or will it hit you better to appoint
the next ? I have written it you see, with the lovely
gravity I can assume Still if you do come I shall
celebrate the event and make a date of it Jupiter, they
say, in his Godly irony grants mortals their wishes I
don t believe in the irony, but I do in accidents, and that

composed an address to Carlyle on his eightieth birthday.
This he wrote down and gave to Mr. Dennis

To CARLYLE

GARRICK CLUB.

This eightieth year of thine sits crowned in light
To lift our England from her fleshly mire
Two generations view thee as a fire
Whence they have drawn what burns in them most
bright.

For thou hast bared the roots of life with sight
Piercing ; in language stronger than the lyre .
And thou hast shown the way must man aspire,
Is through the old sweat and anguish Adamite,
As at the first Unsweet might seem his fate.
Sole with a spade between the stars of earth !—
Giving much labour for his little mirth,
And soldier-service till he fail to strike .
But such thine was, and thine to contemplate
Shall quicken young ambition for the like.

GEORGE M.

To Miss Alice Brandreth ¹

Box Hill, Feb 11, 1876

Wife being absent, I could find
Nought to say to Rosalind
She returns, and swift as wind
Now I write to Rosalind
—Your Orlando, reared as hind,
Was fit mate for Rosalind.
(When his manners were refined)
He had youth like Rosalind.

¹ In reply to an invitation from her to read the part of Bassanio in
the *Merchant of Venice* See footnote (2) page 264

on the quotation concerning Tickell and Addison, where with to oppose Macaulay to Southey, when you have just given the latter at his best We all go with you in your verdict only in a literary sense we feel that you are below your own mark here for an instant —Of course you are not comparing him with Southey but casting light on his style from the first lamp to hand All the more however does it seem to me that you should in such a case be careful of your selection of an example, which you may well cry horror and thrice horror upon, as it stands where you have placed it and which is yet inoffensive enough in its natural place Nay, here I should defend the style of Macaulay, on whom I see the advocate's wig while I hear him thumping excusably in the advocate's manner to defend those two Detestable as is the iterated blow on villany ' it is only so as old Bailey eloquence is so, and appears to be vehement with the good object of wresting life or character from a stupid Jury But if you had apposed some description of William or Luxembourg or Marlborough I should have been better satisfied —On this point I feel so sure, that I am anxious you should consider about it before you republish the essay And I will not ask pardon of a great writer and student for drawing attention to what looks but little

A minor defect, of a kind that I will direct your eye to in Rousseau is at 'blaze and glare' or amplification in language which is not an extension of the idea or fortification of the image There will be a glare if there is a blaze but that is nothing compared with the twice insisted upon harshness of sound in consideration that it is not necessary twice —So fair is your work to me that I am persecuted by such generally imperceptible specks on it

Enclosed is a poem of 3 verses for the Fortnightly,'

now and then a loaf tumbles out of Jupiter's bread basket
O tumble, come ! I 've a great appetite for you

To John Morley

Box Hill, March 28, 1876

MY DEAR MORLEY,—For some time I have been entertaining myself with the notion that you went with the Governor-General to Rome and Naples, and so could not give me a chance of seeing you here. You partly proposed for February ! Will there be a likelihood of it in April ? You know the pleasure and refreshment it is to me—I am busy, idly busy with verse : unable to let go foith that which ought not to have so much time wasted on it, therefore discontented with the work and myself. Your voice would brace me. What is it occupies you ? Hard work, if you have not been absent, but what kind of work ? I am particularly curious to read you this month, on the question of Empress, and as to how you interpret Disraeli's speeches. Is it a genial contempt for the House, or dotage ? does he laugh at the gentiles, or but flounder before them ? I fancy the answer to be that he is heartily sick of the task his Imperial mistress imposed on him at a moment when he did not know the English people so well.

For the rest Radicalism will have nothing to regret in the passing of the Bill.

To John Morley.

Box Hill, April 12, 1876

MY DEAR MORLEY,—The essay on Macaulay is masterly, perfectly balanced, clear, sound, delightful with apt expression in the delivery of a just sentence. I find this fault : I do not think it right that you should 'stumble'

red mounds I smile disdainfully at the voluptuousness that is not largely composed of scratching I am raw therefore therero can be no chance of seeing you here before October) perhaps, then I might come to you for a day on my way to Hawkhurst if I go there and there is some thought of it No mountains for me this year But the tall I get with you is mountain atmosphere to the soul—I have read your 'Robespierre' It sent me to Carlyle He bears the re reading Still that kind of thing will not do It is our only History of the French Revolution and is in as much disorder as the Paris of Danton Evidently this is your work to be done— Have you not trimmed your style? The sentences are more compressed, not at such stretch The picturing of Robespierre seems to me the best that could be done in prose sober acute the mind being all round him while the finger is upon him You do not condemn, do not apologise for him, you explain him and also the time The critical and the narrative power now go well hand in hand A little further predominance to the latter, will make yours the finest of historical styles and as there cannot be a theme more spacious to imagination than the French Revolution I commend you to it for a few years to come I wish it lay as clear before me, as open to my capacity—I shall be glad of the 2nd Part of your study—Harrison has written to me of a mid way meeting for a walk and written again, fearful of Phœbus beams I am more fearful of rousing the ire of the God by appearing to shun them, I climb the hills of mint and thyme and can compare myself only to the Leg of Mutton stewing in herbs à sept heures To say I sweat is to say an angel is holy I am transfigured in my original elements—fire and water—I won't talk of the East I should run to the length of 2 leaders I am compelled to be quite against my instincts I

if you think it worthy.¹ If you can find the Sonnet to Carlyle I shall be glad I am not sure of my memory —
Ever your faithfulest

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Mrs. Brandreth

Box Hill, Dorking,
April 13, 1876

DEAR MRS BRANDRETH,— Please to ask my dear Beatrice—Rosalind—Katherine that I bear in mind the scheme of writing a play for her. Also she should in loyalty be informed that the Professor² has been largely corresponding with me He starts (so was the latest announcement) on the 15th and threatens that when at Baltimore he will bring his whole mathematical force to bear upon the Governors of the Hopkins University to make them invite me with honours to act as his colleague in the shape of lecturer on Poetry and Rhetoric. Thus you see he will insist on having one of us, I have lived near to the Rose, so am sweet to him.—I beg to be remembered to Mr Brandreth and Katherine, and I am ever your most faithful and devoted

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To John Morley

Box Hill, August 15, 1876.

MY DEAR MORLEY,—Receive my thanks for the bag of golden grain I am chained here for a time. in a few days I take Will to Pitfield³ to find comrades with the boy and girls there, previous to his departure to school Perhaps (for the truth is known to you, so I may as well confess it the 'harvesters' are terrific I am spotted

¹ 'A Ballad of Past Meridian'

² Professor Sylvester, the eminent mathematician, who took part in many Shakespeare readings at Mrs Brandreth's and had printed verses of several hundreds of rhymes to Rosalind

³ James Cotter Morison at this time had Pitfield

which consists in the poetic contemplation of themselves as looked on by the eternal hills and to think you in capable of this exquisite reverie is to be unjust to you — One topic of a serious letter to you would be the fate of those Russian Professors for it has been remarked of you that the professor is your natural prey, that you cannot but make him incandescent, and are almost irresponsible in the fatality you exercise But to say this much is to elevate and dignify you at the cost of your immortal nature Wherefore I would adjure you (since these slavic professors are desperate men) to commence your conversation with them by asking each Do you keep pistols and powder? smiling as you ask it, and speaking with that artlessness which has done for every man Jack of a professor in old England Should they wish to know why you ask explain to them of course that you are anxious for their brains

As to the Drama it is ill conceived as yet I have been very busy what I want is to lie fallow for a week and I can't see the week Pecks of poetry have been coming from me However I will bear in mind that you wish the thing done — May fair weather attend you! I desire you to present my compliments to your father and mother, and tell them I pray that my vows are most heartily offered for the comfort of their journey and against the prediction that the drift of the Oriental Congress will be to Constantinople Adieu my wife would send the warmest messages were she presiding over this pen — Your faithfulest GEORGE MEREDITH

To John Morley

Box Hill Sept 8 1876

MY DEAR MORLEY — We must by the nature of the case be fixtures in the Hat box My pavilion¹ is in course

¹ The chalet in the garden

cannot think very much of the Servians. As to Christian against Turk,—to talk in old Tory fashion, the Turk's religion is that of a gentleman by comparison. The Christian is intended to be Russia's catspaw. Yet of course one sees that a nation cancered by the Hareem must be extinguished it cannot live when it has ceased to live in camp and takes to the Hareem for a diversion. Where women are women but for the bed, there is dissolution, brain and heart paralysis—Yes, Beaconsfield!—You were wonderfully good in allowing my ballad¹ to run to that length. I was ashamed, and yet I had to exercise restraint to keep back more verses. I will not press you, but you shall tell me if you are inclined to have other samples of my stores, and if not, be sure I cannot take offence—One who would fain see you again—Oswald Crawfurd—asked warmly of you the other day. I heard of a lady who wanted to fortify herself in her manner of educating a son and bought 'Compromise,' which strengthened her This laurel to you—a prouder than poet's! Adieu I wish it were this evening or to-morrow we were to meet!

To Miss Alice Brandreth

Box Hill, August 20, 1876.

MY DEAR MISS BRANDRETH,—This is to send you on your way with the assurances that we poor abandoned souls look for your return²—with the boots of Kazan¹ (large sized feet). The spelling of your letter shows carefulness But what do you mean by 'sitting, nor taking in much beside the rhythm'? Do you mean, in addition to² or next neighbour to² I am sure you enjoy that heavenly delight of young London ladies in solitude,

¹ 'A Ballad of Fair Ladies in Revolt'

² Miss Alice Brandreth was starting with her mother and father for Russia, Mr Brandreth being one of the English delegates at the Oriental Congress held in St Petersburg in September 1876

assures me that no more than the common doses of theology will be given, and with that I must be satisfied I do not think it well to be howking about the beds where younkers grow to clip their roots and precipitate the natural acerbities in any given direction Young sceptics will hardly avoid being young cynics I burn for converse with you —Very busy with poems —Your ever faithful

GEORGE MEREDITH

To Miss Alice Brandreth

Box Hill, Nov 3 1876

MY DEAR MISS BRANDRETH —I know Palgrave Simpson —am very fond of him and believe he will do anything for me until he knows you when he will be subject to a new allegiance If you and I do not clash therefore, you may count on him I will see him or write to him He is of ripe age, turned of 70 very handsome and with a consuming passion for the stage and the dear heart of him so frankly nourishable by flattery that he will open his mouth and shut his eyes and take it in a ladle, so he will exactly suit you

How I do dislike (in the abstract) men of a certain age who pretend to refuse their spoonful, and all the while their honest old lips are dribbling at the corners as to the coming to town let me come on the Thursday of the week after the one your Mother suggests and go on Friday One night of London And besides I am very busy and shall get no work done for next year if I cease to lash myself, and I am disturbed about my lecture¹ and doubt if it will please If you are moved to do kindness, have my wife the day before I come and whisk her away to music or the play For my part I don't like to leave my baby gal alone in the house for

¹ On the Idea of Comedy

of edification to receive me. But hear my proposal. There is an old farm-house, long-windowed, red-bricked, Elizabethan, just far enough from us to ensure you the sense of solitude, near enough to make it possible to meet: South-west of Dorking · between the chalk hills and the sand, set in lovely rolling country with the moral attraction to you that George Eliot has resided there; backed by a pinewood that was sown by Heaven's hand for contemplation's mood and this used to be let for 4 guineas per week. Shall I walk to it and see if it is open? Or better, will you come down and visit it with me? It is about $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles from Dorking on the road to Guildford I think this a most excellent proposal —Let me add that our cottage would be for you at any price, were it at all in our plans to move —I shall hope to hear from you. Harrison was here yesterday. We are of one mind in admiration of 'Robespierre' But he thinks you are almost too scathing of Disraeli —Your faith-
fullest

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To John Morley.

Box Hill, Sept 13, 1876.

MY DEAR MORLEY,—There is no moving Marie here she must wait, and sorely against her wish. We have no wishes left, but are the instruments of fate.

The more to confound me, the Rookery Farm is let up to the end of October.

To-morrow I take our dear old Will to his first taste of School—at Ewell, under a certain Dr Behr, one time a master at Winchester, well recommended to me, and I like the look of the establishment —This reminds me, Mrs Harrison told me it was the Admiral's Mr Lake, the 'free-thinking' schoolmaster of his boys, who wrote in the 'Spectator' concerning you. Ahem —Behr simply

that one has word praise Audience very attentive and indulgent Time 1 h 25 m and no one left the hall, so that I may imagine there was interest in the lecture Pace moderate but Morison thinks I was intelligible chiefly by the distinctness of articulation

To Miss Alice Brandreth

Box Hill, Feb 28 1877

MY DEAR MISS BRANDRETH,—I have too much work to be in town to morrow, and my promise to myself to go to Dannreuther's concert next time, was but my way of saying how much I liked the last. Otherwise the pleasure of being led there by you would be, as it were to be prepared by a poet to sit with the Muses. I know you will be in full sympathy with one who chances to have said more than he meant and indeed you should be, for by and by (yes it must be so) a certain door will have to be broken open and a room laid bare with many Tops in it, the humming and the peg each with his history of ONE who spun him—and now?—so innocently! in my Dannreuther fashion on that occasion I shall come forward to plead for you—Your very devoted

GEORGE MEREDITH

To Miss Alice Brandreth

Gordon, Jim
 Life and Limb
 Risking 'cause it is his whim
 Hounds to foller
 Breaks his collar
 Bone while giving a view holler
 Ain't this news?
 What's more it's true
 Then in bed the poor lad stews

more than one night—one does not matter. My wife will write to your mother. I beg you to remember me warmly to your father and Mother both, and believe me for life your devoted servant and lord,

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Mrs Brandreth.

Box Hill, Nov 14, 1876.

DEAR MRS BRANDRETH,—To sit with you all three and hear of your tour and of the long leashes of the Russian Professors reduced by Miss Brandreth to a state of spiritual serfage, would be delightful, and what I have hoped for: but so it chances, I am under plight of promise to go to Brighton to my friend Mr Morley on Thursday, and this involves Friday—I think Miss — ought to be informed that our poor sample of a Professor the grey — prodigious in rhyming power, returned to England during her absence—alas! for him—and was seen at the Athenæum I am told that he did not remain long—as why should the unhappy man, the sun being as distant and veiled as in the Black Season at the North Pole.

I hear from Eva that Miss Brandreth will make an entry into our valley some time this month. How grand it would have been in the Boots of Kazan! But in any form it will be a wonderful refreshment to us Please to give my very warm regards to Mr. Brandreth, and my cordial salutes to my Katherine (tamed), and believe me your most faithful and devoted GEORGE MEREDITH

To John Morley.

Saturday

DEAREST M,—One line. All went well.¹ Morison in one of his enthusiasms—which make one remember

¹ A lecture, 'On the Idea of Comedy and the Uses of the Comic Spirit,' delivered at the London Institution, February 1, 1877

working in that mine only,—and yet I like a certain kind of open mindedness. By the way, in the last book noticed (by Garnett is it?) I find By the first living Italian poet. The possible English of this is that the preceding have been dead ones. Garnett has not to be taught English, but here is an example of the bad effect of writing much for journals. 'First of living Ital poets' he means.

O my dear Morley, come if only you can, for you are a great delight to me when I see you. My wife is in the cottage below, or she would send messages to yours.

To Admiral Maxse¹

Box Hill, March 31 1877

MY DEAR ADMIRAL—I can't but admire Mrs Besant for her courage. On the whole I must approve the publication, though to me the book is repulsive. I have a senseless shrinking from it. More horrible scenes of animal life can hardly be suggested. They effectually deprive me of appetite. The male—the female. Lord God!

Your remarks on Odger were very good, I was glad to see them.

You talk of a Surrey walk. Once more you flash the old delusive flag of a holiday before me. Why do you not come? I am here. I have not removed from here for several years—Yours ever warmly

GEORGE MEREDITH

By the way I am in my Chalet well worth a visit. The second room of it contains the hammock cot enviable the sleeper therein!

¹ Captain Maxse was promoted Rear Admiral in 1877

His neck twirling

Mr. Curling

Straight has set like surgeon sterling¹

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To John Morley

Box Hill, March 31, 1877.

MY DEAR MORLEY,—We have now a bedroom to offer you and your wife Will you come? And can you come before the 13th April? It will rejoice us to see you, and refresh me.

Remember that it is your habit peremptorily to cry against invitations in harvest-Bug-time Therefore we think you due to us now

And I want you to see my cottage—annexe—chalet on the terrace I think you will agree with me, that it is the prettiest to be found, the view is without a match in Surrey The interior full of light, which can be moderated, and while surrounded by firs, I look over the slope of our green hill to the ridges of Leith, round to Ranmore, and the half of Norbury

I have the hope that if you can come you will. Let it be Both of you

I am very busy, doing little, but doing it diligently, which you know to mean well

The article on Comedy is out cursed with misprints that make me dance gadfly-bitten

I am greatly taken with Goldwin Smith's article I could not have written it, but the idea has been mine.

Trollope's art on Cicero shows him to have a feeling for his hero It reads curiously as though he were addressing a class of good young men This is the effect of the style, or absence of style One likes him for

¹ James Edward Henry Gordon, a pioneer electrical engineer and a hard rider to hounds He married Miss Alice Brandreth.

present and anything grander than the days and nights at my porch you will not find away from the Alps for the dark line of my hill runs up to the stars the valley below is a soundless gulf There I pace like a shipman before turning in In the day with the S West blowing, I have a brilliant universe rolling up to me —well, after midnight I sat and thought of Gothe and of the sage in him and the youth And, somewhat in his manner, the enclosed came of it I send it to you for your private reading It was written off before I went to bed, and has only the merit of exactly hitting its mark I feel it this morning a poor return to make to you for Das Göttliche But you will excuse me, for the meaning of speech is to seek an audience—if a friend, the better By the way, some one told me the other day that he felt sure of you for Stoke He said the Address to the Miners had made a great impression I trust so

I am very hard at work writing a 5 Act Comedy in verse besides tales poems, touches of a novel and helping my wife with a translation But in this room of mine I should have no excuse for idleness In truth work flows with me —Adieu —Yours ever most warmly

GEORGE MEREDITH

[*The Enclosure*]

MENTOR AND PUPILS ,

MENTOR

Be warned of steps retrieved in pain

PUPILS

We have strength we have blood we are young

MENTOR

Youth sows the links, man wears the chain

PUPILS

Shall a sweet lyric cease to be sung ?

To John Morley.

Box Hill, April 4.

MY DEAR MORLEY,—May, then !

But let not this be one of your lyrical postponements to a phantasm appointment the most delusive gilded thing that ever danced between Box Hill and Brighton.

. . . There are horrid errors in the printing of the 'Comic,' some, I am afraid, attributable to me : I am the worst of correctors of my own writing.

I saw Myers' on George Sand. I took up a friend's copy of '19th Century,' and after the symposium turned to see what might be said of our favourite —not bad, with one or two good points well done as of the effect of a female Gothe on the aident males —It 's wrong to be wishing April were May, for I hope to get over a great deal of work before then. But you excite the unnatural wish.

Well. The first week in May. Are you bound to me ? —You will find more flowers about you—that is one advantage—I hope your wife is better already.—Yours ever warmly,

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To John Morley.

Box Hill, April 5, 1877.

MY DEAR MORLEY,—I have read *Das Gottliche* this morning, and with a feeling of new strength, which is like conception in the brain This is the very spirit of Gothe I have many times come in contact with it and been ennobled Fault of mine, if not more ! This high discernment, this noblest of unconsidered utterance, this is the Hymn for men. This is to be really prophet-like All other prophecy is insolence.

I had not read it last night, being very busy.—You should know, I work and sleep up in my cottage at

PUPILS

She is beckoning who shall oppose ?

MENTOR

Behold a giant in his prime

PUPILS

On her breasts are the beams of the day

MENTOR

A cripple he, surprised by Time !

PUPILS

She has loosened her girdle give way !

To John Morley

Box Hill, April 20 1877

MY DEAR MORLEY,— At this moment your Promise for the first days in May sleeps like any other innocent in the purity of infancy. Is it fair to rob it of these hours and call it to misty delusiveness before its time ? I am half tempted with a shudder, to think not and yet we wish to know whether, as before so frequently All I can say is that the nightingale is now in sweet song there 's not the ghost of a harvester to bite you even in fancy I want you to see my study, I want to see you We have a bedroom and dressing room for you You will be here upon the opening of the breeches Really the sweet o' the year

To Lieut Colonel Charles Brackenbury¹

Box Hill, April 25 1877

MY DEAR BRACKENBURY,—Overbusied, I can scarcely get time to write—I have influence with one publisher

¹ Lieut Colonel (later General) Charles Brackenbury R.A. He had acted as *Times* correspondent in the Austrian Italian and Franco Prussian wars and published among other works on military subjects *European Armaments in 1867* and *Frederick the Great*

MENTOR

The song is short, the travail long.

PUPILS

Shall the morning brood over her grave ?

MENTOR

Forge weapons now to meet the throng.

PUPILS

There 's a bird flying white o'er the wave.

MENTOR

The torrent of the blood control.

PUPILS

'Tis a steed bounding whither we will.

MENTOR

In more than name discern the soul.

PUPILS

There is Love like a light on the hill.

MENTOR

That light of Love is fleeting fire.

PUPILS

In the deep sea of Love let us dive.

MENTOR

The test of Love is in the lyre.

PUPILS

Give us Love, and the lyre is alive.

MENTOR

The chords are snapped by passion's touch.

PUPILS

She is there, by the tall laurel-rose.

MENTOR

You sway the staff—you grasp the crutch

but amusing in its decorously faced recurrence — name a day when we may expect you after your return — We have now a bedroom, and Will's room serves for bath room for husbands but if you will forego it it will serve for a bedroom for E—, whom I (we all) should be very glad to see and hear I wish we had a third room for Miss J—

Good be wi ye, ye silly sulky Taffy! Hero 's a mutton bone for you any day if you 'll only come and take it — Your countryman (void of their errors)

GEORGE MEREDITH

To John Morley

Box Hill, June 21 1877

MY DEAR MORLEY,—I hoped to hear from you that you were coming, and that I might look to a glad two or three days—more you never allow me in imagination, nor practically so much Write on this head and do not suppose that I ask it because I doubt your still graceful dexterity in evasion I wish to see you, as part of my Summer But why should I write in pathos! I foresee the grin up to the ear tips of exulting Puel ery And would the world believe it of its philosopher, were I to inform the world ?

It is this knowledge, that I see deep and am discredited, which does for me

I am as a cracking earth, and soon it will be too late for the seed in me to be raised by rain

Whither go you this year? The pleasant bool of Miss Edwards¹ turns my eyes to France (if I can go any where), but Marie gives me not the best tidings of your wife, and hints at possible German Baths and if you were sentenced to one I might be tempted to trudge after

¹ *A Year in Western France*

only. On reading the MS. I was forced to the conclusion that I must not recommend it. Believe me, I regretted it; for I admire and could love the writer. I say earnestly it will be better to put the work by. read, meditate, and wait to produce another. She will in time do good work, for she has a head and that which spins the blood to generous fire. But it is not friendly to urge her to publish. Moreover, I doubt her getting pay for it. If I thought that she would, I might, in view of possible present needs, hesitate. Still I should not know to whom to recommend this kind of novel. She is too good to produce the popular rubbish: too young to hit higher moods.

Shall we see you in May?—War!—Ass that I was, not to go for a conscript when a lad! Soldiering is the profession of the next 15 years' future, I suppose—Your very loving

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To F— J—s.

Box Hill, May 26, 1877.

What is the meaning of this nasty silence, J—? You have fallen into one of your Welsh tempers. You refuse all invitations, and you incite your good wife to gird at me and pretend that it is I who am to blame. Shame on you, Cambrian! Every Cambrian is not a shaggy inveterate in suspicion, susceptibility, thin-skinnedness, and malice. Why must you be, Jones? I forgave you when you slipped out of your bonded engagement to take me home with you and give me supper last February 1st. Were you insensible to my generosity? Your appointment by the seaside is a patent invention. We don't believe a word of it. Be 'a man, J—!' Drop us word that you mean to come: or if you really must go down to the melancholy widowed ocean, try a stroke of humour—not original with you,

when you start for Dinant alone I might but no
 —Yours ever warmly GEORGE MEREDITH

To William Hardman

Box Hill, Sept 25 1877

DEAR AND HONOURED SIR WILLIAM —(In Sherwood Tuck) I have just come from a visit to Brackenbury at Aldershot and I find your letter glad to hear from you. Notice of your departure for Wales had been forwarded to me by my private agency. I will confess I think you might have given me a day on the Hill but my friends are all free men. Curses on him that would constrain them in aught! I have not seen the Notice you speak of nor heard of the same. Apparently to judge by your hints it is by one who has thought it necessary to go mad to deal with me becomingly. This may be a compliment but the result is that the public finds itself in the presence of not one but Two Incomprehensibles and the impression is deepened that hard must be the nut when the cracker falls into contortions.

If you have not seen the 'New Quarterly Magazine for July last let me commission D Trois to get it from Mudie's. Run your eyes over 'The Case of General Ogle and Lady Camper' I think you will recognize the General and remember the case. My love to D Trois and the young ladies —Ever warmly yours,

GEORGE MEREDITH

To John Morley

Box Hill Oct 18, 1877

MY DEAR MORLEY —I hear you are at philosophic Pitfield. I wish to see you and shake your hand and hear of your travels. I have a country cousin's eagerness for that great relation of events. Your letter from Gmunden was pleasant to receive. Morison wrote sub

you and sojourn in your neighbourhood a short space, just to taste German atmosphere with you and watch you divided, as no other man would be so strangely, between a certain solid intellectual approbation of the race, and disgust of their manners: admiration of their strengthiness, and a sense of their spiritual flatness. great respect for them, and a hesitancy to determine whether they are now at their full growth, or that there is light above them to conjure them higher and higher. If the latter, they are the world's masters Adieu, my friend, I am very anxious about your Rose's health I do think it would do you both some good to come here, and remember, now is our time to offer our poor inducement: this next three weeks.—Ever yours,

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Admiral Marse.

Box Hill, August 21, 1877.

MY DEAR FRED,—I heard of your return from Morley, and I received the Index and read 'The Cynic' and a remark on your work, rightly appreciative. Morley is now on his way. As for me, I fear I am again condemned to trot round my circle, like an old horse at a well, everlastingly pulling up the same buckets full of a similar fluid I may be precipitated abroad by incapacity to continue writing, and once or twice the case has looked like it, though I have recovered in a middling fashion: but not to do the work I call good—rather the character of work one is glad to leave behind, however glad to have accomplished Things look so bad (to apply them to my own affairs) for books that I doubt whether I ought to spend the money Even when they are fairly good I have the doubt

Adieu All the good powers be with you. Tell me

Judging of what MacMahon may do by his antecedents I am inclined to think that the man who could hesitate about his paramount manifest duty toward the country when plain sense told him to save the one army of Franco for the defence of the capital, and a telegram from the Imperial ministry pushed him to Metz while the enemy was in front and on his flank—this Marshal Donkey might do anything

The situation is enough to make us all anxious but the temperance of the French gives me some repose

De Broglie of course is the one who makes us feel blackest—As for the army, it would split for civil war Very probably the Republican section would be beaten, the country thrown back for ten years But the ten would do more harm to the cause of the winners Honest rule must come round to a people so self-contained and intelligent—Ever yours warmly, GEORGE MEREDITH

To John Morley

Box Hill, Nov 16 1877

MY DEAR MORLEY,—I return you Garrison's letter 'Want of courage' is no doubt often the visible gap in Celtic character for this reason that the Celt, if not pushing forward will be shrinking Movements that are impulse either assail, or they have the tendency to contract and retreat The French are Gallo enough to show this Nevertheless I see a harmonizing and solidifying of the logical brain with the mercurial blood in them As to Gambetta and his trusting to phrases, the temptation to utter them to an interviewer must be great, either to keep conversation going, or to put the sympathetic guest in better heart or to console oneself with a trumpet sound in touching subjects vexatious He must be judged by his public conduct, which is good —

sequently of rain assailing you at Ischl, which I had vowed for you, but not desired. I have been nowhere during your absence excepting to Pitfield, and to Aldershot to Brackenbury home from the Russians. I am consequently dull, unrubbed, no reflector. I write, and not perfectly to my satisfaction.

We shall have a couple of beds here at the end of the month, if there is a chance of catching you and your wife —you do owe it to us

Your stay on the Königsee, at the St. Bartolomae little inn at the end of the lake, must have been about the pleasantest time of your excursion. I did not see the lake at night, and I was with captious cockney comrades. I still have a throb to be up the Walzmann ; I propose it, and much of that region, for next year—or next. I have not been away for six !

I hope you are refreshed, furious for the pen. . . .

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To John Morley.

Box Hill, Nov 10, 1877.

MY DEAR MORLEY,—Let me hear from you when you are stronger not that I wish to ring my bell to summon you here, but that bronchitis rather alarms me. I have had reason to dread it—not on my own account, for throat and chest with me seem inexpugnable

I am perplexed by Spottiswoode's application to me to lecture at the Royal I hate it, and it does not pay me, it makes me nervous, and I have to give up my inner mind's work to it But I have the question going on, whether I ought to decline anything, I, unlucky, portionless, ill-paid !

France, from a knave, fallen to a fool !

But no, the gain has been precious in the interval. She has gained in self-knowledge, and a reasonable courage.

the Regiment! Had I time, I would compose a La Bruyere abstract of it—Born with Satan's blessing too! His kettle drum taps marched France to Sedan His more than Louis Napoleon's The Thiers fed French really thought at the sound of the bugle that another chapter of the Windy History was to be written Here I am pulled up but I could talk with you over sheets

To John Morley

Box Hill Nov 24 1877

MY DEAR MORLEY,—The day before your enclosure of Pattison's article on you arrived I heard of it and was longing to see it I have had great pleasure in reading it A point is marked of what one would have prescribed for one's young ambition—and the more' may not be more worth having Here is the man best entitled to sit as judge and he hands you the laurel crown —of the secondary order only because the years are yet wanting that shall make you ripe for the first —If I did not feel myself happily cut off from all ambition I could envy you As it is, I see you housed in a warm resting place by the way and I go on over frozen ruts whither we shall meet Is that a stern forewarning to you? No, for an old master's praise is a lasting possession the best of promptings Nevertheless (and this is the sum of what I would say) the last infirmity of noble minds is an infirmity but susceptibility to the purest sources of Fame speaks of health See the emptiness of it take the passing benefit Neither water nor wine shall give eternal life That they invigorate for the hour is enough —Here is a sermon to one who needs it less than most men proof of pragmatical ineptitude in the deliverer!—I hope you are really better—Your Black Christian of

Harrison speaks of the French in the tone of one who forgets that they have had a terrific whipping. And when he speaks of Mirabeau and Danton, let him imagine those two after the Revolution, opposed to a military chief more than probably having the army in his hand.—MacMahon might be shot by a Republican battalion, but the shot missing, he would have all the regiments Conservatism and its friend Fear are strong enough to give him sway for a time. But the Republic is only a withdrawing tide. Back it comes ten years hence. In a third of the time it might be established by an alternation of conciliation and firmness. A Big Fool with power, we must treat like a madman on a housetop, and affectionately induce him to destroy himself for us.—I cannot clearly see what Harrison wants. His paper in the next 'Frightly' may show. His 'Englishman' letters were currently instructive.

Yes, I wish to see you, and have a mill-tide of talk on varieties, but do not ask me, I have to get through a wall of work that frowns on me as one on a wrong track at present. I am very grateful for fair Florence.—Yours ever,

GEORGE MEREDITH.

Cause me to be remembered in your household

As to the sort of men who sat with Pym and Hampden, do we show them now? If not, should we pose them before the French? All countries would want a heavy shaking to bring such men to the front—I have been pleased with the plain writing of Froude's A'Becket in the '19th Century.' Your Raynal instructs me I am ashamed to say, I did not know of him. Pattison on 'Books' is perfectly correct. As with India, irrigation would improve his produce—Senior's Thiers is a lasting picture to me of the Devil's own Infernal Imp Statesman, yea, begotten by Machiavelli of the Vivandière of

making no false move Patience! as the man says in Mauprat The power of taking an injury without scoring blood for it will be of wonderful example in France—Yours, trusting for a better account of your health,

GEORGE MEREDITH

I salute your wife A kiss to Florence A punch in the ribs to Johnson

To John Morley

Box Hill, *First ten minutes of 1878*

MY DEAR MORLEY,—I tossed off a letter to St B to end the year '77 I greet you in the first hour of the New One, after a look at the stars from my chalet door, and listening to the bells We have just marked one of our full stops, at which Time turning back as he goes looks with his old gentleman smile To come from a gaze at the stars—Orion and shaking Sirius below him—is to catch a glance at the inscrutable face of him that hurries us on, as on a wheel from dust to dust—I thought of you and how it might be with you this year hoped for good saw beyond good and evil to great stillness, another form of moving for you and me It seems to me that Spirit is—how, where and by what means involving us, none can say But in this life there is no life save in spirit The rest of life and we may know it in love—is an aching and a rotting

It is late I have been writing all day With all my heart I wish you well—And am ever yours,

GEORGE MEREDITH

To William Hardman

Box Hill March 15 1878

My CITIZEN! my Farrier! soon to be my Common Serjeant!—You have my vote and interest I am out

the Bloody Cross appears to have been blest by GAWD¹ recently. If I had time I should like to write his hymn. Te Deum : with chorus of 'all the historians'—Yours most warmly,

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To John Morley.

Box Hill, Nov 28, 1877.

MY DEAR MORLEY,—When Morison sent me word of poor Bridger's ambition to enter into the Grocery line in Puttenham village, I had simultaneously a vision of a shivering bare little shop edging its way by rotation to the sparse shower of nourishing gold on that—as to grocers—arctic common I supposed Bridger must know best ; as I generally do when I am prophetic.—He would have suited me had I built stables and rooms over them , and this I cannot do for a year—or two, when I hope to prosper better.

In this valley a good gardener may sometimes command a place , or good coachman.

Can he be strongly recommended in either capacity ? He has, I think, a wife and children how many ? How much does he require for his services per week ?

I do not know of a place vacant ; but the above particulars should be known to me. I promise not to forget him.

I go to town for a night to-morrow, and shall call on Morison. He writes in a wildly lamentable tone of France. And this when such is the popular feeling[°] (including the military) toward the Republic, that a conspiracy to ruin it could not succeed beyond five years, and would displace it for that term only to endear it by proving its value to the country. That big Dunderhead in the hands of the shuffling Duke and the clerics may do harm for a time. But he has not got much, it is evident, by sounding the army. All depends on the Republicans

¹ Note to letter 'Or "Gord"'

To Miss Alice Brandreth ¹

April 11 1878

Now dawns all waken to your seal of life
 This day which names you bride to make you wife,
 Time shows the solid stamp then see dear maid
 Round those joined hands our prayers for you inlaid

GEORGE AND MARIE M

To R. L. Stevenson

Box Hill, Dorking June 4 1878

MY DEAR STEVENSON — I had not time to write to you immediately after reading the book — but my impressions are fresh My wife has gained possession of it at last so I should have to run down to the house to quote correctly She fell on the book, I snatched it she did the same but I regaining it, cut the pages constituting an act of ownership I leave this to her invariably so she was impressed and abandoned the conflict I have been fully pleased The writing is of the rare kind which is naturally simple yet picked and choice It is literature The eye on land and people embraces both and does not take them up in bits I have returned to the reading and shall again The reflections wisely tickle they are in the right good tone of philosophy interwrought with humour

My protest is against the Preface and the final page The Preface is keenly in Osric's vein — everything you will dear worthy public but we are exceeding modest and doubt an you will read us though exquisitely silken calved we are and could say a word of ourselves yet on seeing our book, were we amazed at our littleness

¹ On her marriage with Mr J E H Gordon
² *An Inland Voyage* published in May 1878

among the Aldermen to canvass them. Though it seems a deplorable halting and stooping on a path hitherto brilliant as it has been adventurous, that you should wish to be a serjeant at all, and a common serjeant of all things, we will seek to gratify your good wish, queer in appearance only, I trust. What does the Great Mother say to it? Down here there is an idea that, in apprehension of war, you apply for the post to prepare the Court of Aldermen to face the foe by drilling. But surely this is a new development? Only, confound it, you are always blazing in new places,—as though the Great Mother had been dreaming of crackers at a certain period.

As for the latest Photographs—hum. I was glad of the gift, glad to see the face. But it's rather steely; capital for a Common Serjeant, whom I would depute to the post on the strength of it.

Let me hear if you are in for a big dignity; and when you have a berth to sling to a dog, remember where he lieth.

The Mg. Post has fought well beside the 'Pall Mall,' but the sentimental or party-ridden English have spoiled the hour.

It is now too late to oust the Russians. No country like ours can afford to fight at so terrible a disadvantage as they offer us. We must wait for new complications. Meanwhile press for an army. Ultimately it will come to a Conscription, and the sooner the better. The volunteering system gives us men no match for countries that bring their best into the field, and in overpowering hosts.

Adieu, my friend. Give my love to Mrs. Common Serjeant and the young ladies.

I do hope you will give us a day in the spring.

G. M.

invitation attracts, and *Dupliné* has heights enough
My *Egoist* is on the way to a conclusion Of pot
boilers let none speak Jove hangs them upon necks that
could soar above his heights but for the accursed weight

Adieu I trust you are well Look to health Run
to no excess in writing or in anything I hope you will
feel that we expect much of you I beg you to remember
me to your father and mother —Yours very faithfully,

GEORGE MEREDITH

To G. H. Foote

Box Hill, Dorking August 19 1878.

DEAR SIR —I have not to learn from your letter that
you do me the honour to rank my works of some worth
and that you put yourself to trouble to make them better
known¹ I will not offer you my thanks for such things
are past the sense of obligation To feel that men like
you and 'B V read and have a taste for what I produce
is full of encouragement to me to write on with good
heart —We will not speak of our public which is a funny
public pardonable for its humours and wants rough
shaking and persistent teaching before it will have a
zest or respect for literature that is not directed to adorn
a library or illustrate a drawing room table Peut-être
que cela lui vient d'un manque de cœur At any rate
the English cure one early of a desire for applause, and
as well as I could do I have worked without thought of
that and the profit coming of it —I should not fancy that
cheap editions of my writings would sell Perhaps they
will go better in time but I cannot voluntarily advertise
them by the author of

Now let me add what is of more importance to my
mind in communicating with you that I admire the

¹ Mr Foote had written complaining of what he considered gratuitous
hindrances to the circulation of Meredith's works

indeed and truly, my lord Public ! ' As for the closing page, it is rank recency. ' Yes, Mr Barlow,' said Tommy, ' I have travelled abroad, under various mishaps, to learn in the end that the rarest adventures are those one does not go forth to seek.' ' My very words to him,' said Mr. Barlow to himself, at the same time presenting Tommy with a guinea piece — This last page is quite out of tone with the spirit of the book

I remember ' On the Oise,' you speak of the river hurrying on, ' never pausing to take breath.' This, and a touch of excess in dealing with the reeds, whom you deprive of their beauty by overinforming them with your sensations, I feel painfully to be levelled at the Saxon head It is in the style of Dickens.

But see what an impression I have of you when these are the sole blots I discover by my lively sensations in the perusal

Should you be in communication with Mr Henley, I beg you will convey to him my sense of the honour he does me by giving so much attention to my work. I, who have worked for many years not supposing that any one paid much heed to me, find it extraordinary. His praise is high indeed, but happily he fetches me a good lusty clout o' the head now and again, by which I am surprisingly well braced and my balance is restored. Otherwise praise like that might operate as the strong waters do upon the lonely savage unused to such a rapture

You should see the foliage of our valley. Come you to London on your way to the Continent, you must give us a visit Whither do you go ? How is the mood for work with you ? In August I believe I am bound for Dauphiné, where a French brother-in-law of my wife, a militaire, has a pied à terre on the borders of Savoy. I am rather more in the mood for South Tyrol, but the

dozen differently coloured torches you will find held up in our woods For which, however, as well as for your sensitive skin, we require stillness and a smiling or sober sky

I heard of your separation from Greenwood by Jovian editorial stroke and of your rap back I regret the matter He is the loser Let us meet soon It would do me good to hear you swear an oath by the might and majesty of Benedetto never again to let a month go by without seeing me whereas we begin to count the year going

Give my warm salutations to Mrs Carr —I am, yours friendliest,

GEORGE MEREDITH

To Admiral Maxse

Box Hill Oct 14 1878

MY DEAR ADMIRAL—On Tuesday, as you are well aware I am bound to make my pilgrimage to town This afternoon I am disengaged but having to work up to half past three, I can't mount the hill on the faint chance of finding you—I should be late in my return and I have work at night

Yet I want very much to see you—apart from an ancient foolishness that I cherish and keep young The Governor¹ is in violent wrath with a Dr Oelker who attacks him as Governor of his Island Instantly his Excellency despatches me all the papers on the subject of this contention—Oelker's pamphlet, his own comments Hamburg journals And it appears that Oelker obtained insertion for one of his letters in the Times But I have not seen this letter I am very busy finishing a work I am not controversial, and I really should not know how to proceed with prudence if I were How

¹ Sir Fitzhardinge Maxse then Governor of Heligoland

fight you are making, and class you among the true soldiers Heinrich Heine called himself for doing battle with the pen I have in your example to suppose that ours is a public neglectful of brave men ; a worse offence than neglect of a man of letters

As to my poems, I have lost the ardour for publishing them ; perhaps in a year or two they may appear , I am well content to remain unpublished while the poems of ' B. V. ' are withheld To him as to me, the conditions of sale, which frown on collections of verse not offering themselves as appropriate gift-books for the innumerable nuptial curate and his bride, are, I fear, adverse. Poetry in England is required to have a function of a practical kind, and to exercise it

I trust I show you that you give me great pleasure in writing to me —Most faithfully yours,

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To J. Comyns Carr

Box Hill, Oct. 9, 1878

MY DEAR CARR,—Praise of yours comes from the right quarter. There is no man whom I would so strongly wish to please with my verse I wish I had more time for it, but my Pactolus, a shrivelled stream at best, will not flow to piping. And as to publishing books of verse, I have paid heavily for that audacity twice in Pounds sterling. I had for audience the bull, the donkey, and the barking cur. He that pays to come before them a third time—we will not give him his name

This hullabaloo of air with drenchers to vary the monotony of row, though I like it myself, will not allow an invitation to allure you. But when there is a cessation, perhaps you and Mrs Carr will do us the honour to come and see the Indian summer here. A

The other day Tom Taylor happened to be writing to me and he put as a pendant, that he had been reading Morison's Gibbon and liked it very greatly I hope you are all well I give a thought to the Westminster Carp¹ now and then on frosty mornings and see the mortar board blunting its angles in passengers eyes on the way to school at lightning speed Give my love to the children and a delicate morsel—manipulated by yourself if you must—to Mrs S Morley I trust you have good news of —Your loving

GEORGE MEREDITH

To Frederick Greenwood

Box Hill Dorking Nov 11 1878

MY DEAR GREENWOOD,—An artist who has been stricken with blindness has taken to his pen and has published 2 vols called Half Hours of a Blind Man's Holiday by W W Fenn I had a slight acquaintance with him once and he writes to me to do what I can to get his book noticed under the strange supposition that because I publish works of fiction I have interest on the Press He does not beg to be favourably reviewed, but early and perhaps with a bit of consideration for his case which is hard In ordinary circumstances I would withstand many requests of the kind before troubling you You will see that I am excused

I go strongly with you in your work To have won Ld Shaftesbury from the Holy Faction is a fine piece of work and all your doing For the Rhodope horrors required to be struck on many times and no one else did it I never see you and the loss is greatly mine— Your affectionate

GEORGE MEREDITH.

¹ Mr Cotter Morison's son—now Sir Theodore Morison K CIE—
at that time at Westminster School—an ardent fisherman

put the Governor's reply into shape? And would it not be wiser to make no reply, but lie by for the next attack, and then write out fairly what it is desired should be said. Otherwise a second hand is in great danger by making a mess of it—Try to call here on Wednesday afternoon, that we may consult.

I have been nowhere but on my weekly hack-cab-horse expeditions, and it is doubtful that I shall ever go anywhere except on that tramroad, until I proceed in mute accompaniment to my Last March Life under these conditions is not so seductive as it appeared in youth, though in youth I looked out under a hail of blows. I don't complain, you see, of inconsistency in my career. If I could quit England, hold off from paper, and simply look on for the remainder of my term—mountains near—I would ask for no better. To be mixed up with them is hard, these English are so astonishing to my ideas of dignity and valour. Their present hugging of their India, which they are ruining for the sake of giving a lucrative post to younger sons of their middle class, is a picture for mankind. They and the Russians are matched. But the Russians have the excuse of barbarian politicians

Adieu.—Yours warmly,

GEORGE M.

To James Cotter Morison

Box Hill,

MY DEAR ST. B,—It was like you to think of me when you were saying Adieu to dear old Pitfield. I repeat it, and with the same feelings.

I hope to propose myself to you for a night in January. At present I have the Devil behind me slave-driving. How often would it be a consolation to me to see you for an hour if I could but spare time. Ahasuerus passing the cheerfulness of Inns has about the same kind of feeling.

To Frederick Greenwood

Box Hill Dorking Dec 31 1878

MY DEAR GREENWOOD,—I wish you health and strength for the New Year. You do the work of a good soldier. I see your watchfulness perpetually besides the big strokes and thwacks and for no man have I so warm a desire to see him sustained to keep to his task as for you. Adieu. Remember me to Traill.—Yours

GEORGE MEREDITH

To R. L. Stevenson

Box Hill Dorking April 16 1879

MY DEAR STEVENSON—I have had but the song of a frog for a correspondent since your letter reached me and my note is Batrachian still. A hint of suppressed Influenza seems to have been the cause my customary specific of hard exercise with which I generally sweat out all attacks has this time failed. I do nothing but read, and that flimsily.—We have all been grieved to hear of your illness. Mariette says Il a mangé trop de pickles! I fear it may be from overwork. Take my advice defer ambition and let all go easy with you until you count forty —then lash out from full stores. You are sure to keep imagination fresh and will lose nothing by not goading it.

My *Egoist* has been out of my hands for a couple of months but Kegan Paul does not wish to publish it before October. I don't think you will like it. I doubt if those who care for my work will take to it at all. And for this reason after doing my best with it I am in no hurry to see it appear. It is a Comedy with only half of me in it, unlikely therefore to take either the public or my friends. This is true truth but I warned you that I am cursed with a croak—I am about one quarter

To James Cotter Morison

Box Hill, Dec. 26, 1878

DEAREST ST. B,—One word of Adieu to you before you are off, and my wishes for sweet wafting airs to you, away and home—I have recently looked at Leslie Stephen's 'Alps in Winter,' and the refreshingness of it bids me ask you why you don't go to see Geneva and a valley or two, and home round by the Simplon and the Riviera, taking Burgundy and Langres on your return?

But pleasure perhaps is choicest when we launch upon (*the waters*) and leave the route to them. Let me hear from you when you are at Montague Place again. After which you are to give me as good a chronicle of this as of the preceding journey—Your loving

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To G. W. Foote

Box Hill, DORKING, Dec 31, 1878.

DEAR SIR,—I have ordered 'The Liberal' of my bookseller, and shall do what I can to make it spread. I trust you will succeed with it. I am naturally doubtful, considering the public we have, but of many failures comes the final victory, and to fail is neither shameful nor disheartening if our hearts are firmly set upon the cause we support. If by chance I have any piece of writing, or 'see matter to write of, that I think may suit your magazine, I will forward it. At present I have little leisure. But I shall request you to examine rigidly any writing you receive from me, and that you will not hesitate to reject it, should it not be perfectly to your taste. I am too hard on myself to be subject to sensitiveness, and I have a considerate feeling for editors—Yours very truly,

GEORGE MEREDITH.

mediate flight Happily there was no inflammation of the trachea accompanying it

However I am getting free of this clutch My wife and Mariette go to Eastbourne next week and I think, if you will have me, I will offer myself for a couple of days I should like to come I think it would be Monday but I will write Let me hear if the week I choose is one to suit you

I saw Browning at the Grosvenor Gallery private inspection last Wednesday, and mentioned to him that his Pheidippides (the run to Sparta) had been proposed by you to me and by me shrunk from I have not yet seen the poem

Marriott gave me a good account of Morley some time back and that as I never see him now refreshed me --- Adieu dear St B —Your loving GEORGE MEREDITH

To James Cotter Morison

Box Hill May 22 1879

DEAR ST B —I am glad that the strain is at an end with Theodore

His fishing rod was despatched yesterday by rail, with a label addressed to him

But the Fatal Breeks have not arrived

Nor will they, I should think

Adieu my dear friend I hope the boy will have a pleasant holiday Here all my people are absent The carpets are up and the walls are peeled I go below for a dinner and hurriedly return from a place that looks as if gutted par les Prussiens —The days were pleasant with you, as always —Your loving

GEORGE MEREDITH

through 'The Amazing Marriage,' which, I promise you, you shall like better

Paul cannot yet let me have a copy of the 'Donkey in the Cevennes,' of which I am very hopeful

We fully expect you and look for you to come to us in May. Please bring good weather. Let me hear that you progress and can put one leg forward. Then we can calculate that the other will follow, and we will count the days till we have you. Our plans are, to fill the cottage with friends during May, June, and part of July; after which we go to Dauphiné for some weeks, home about the end of September . . . My wife condoles with you, greets you, and will be glad to welcome you, of this from me be well assured. I beg you to present my compliments to your father and mother —Yours very cordially,

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To James Cotter Morison.

Box Hill, May 6, 1879

MY DEAR ST B,—Mariette has come right round and is rosy again. But I am lank, limp, and cavern-chapped; I have had and have not quite thrown off an attack of what is called catarrh of the stomach, owing to weakness in that region from a prolonged course of writing at night during winter. And since it came on I have been quite unable to write a line. The effect is a sort of 'old man's cough'. You cough your breath out and labour to draw it back as if you had to count a million to the minute, and was rising in a bucket from perdition's deeps, with every prospect of going down with a run. The windpipe closes, in fact, the hangman has you by the throat each ten or twenty minutes, you are a merry Gallows' bird. And to be waked up at night by a seizure, is akin to the dark archangel's intimation to you to prepare for im-

of your chances of success I should venture to say that a strong political article is wanted each month—to head the flock—one in which the Philosophy of Radicalism would cast its light on parties But the pen to show philosophy in controversial Radicalism is rarely to be met—I am most faithfully yours

GEORGE MEREDITH

To John Dennis

Box Hill DORKING June 5 1879

DEAR DENNIS—Be assured that I have no other feeling than thankfulness to one who can take notice of my work without seizing me by the collar to shake me and then pitch me upon Covent Garden's cabbage leaves I have found it rare to be treated otherwise in the land of bulls and bull dogs But you spoke in the tone of criticism and if not wholly I could partly agree with you When I think of what I say of others I fully accord the right of the world to have its reply upon me and all that I pretend to do is to write as well as I can—Faithfully yours

GEORGE MEREDITH

To James Cotter Morison

Box Hill July 1 1879

MY DEAR ST B—I discover that the date of your dinner party falls on a Tuesday Now—that is a day when I am quite a slave and never free until half past eight So I cannot come But ask me for some day when you will be alone And better still after your 15th, give me a visit here and take a draught of Box Hill aqueous atmosphere—for dry is nowhere to be had To me however the days and nights are splendid cloud scenery of the mightiest Tell me you will come

Have not the papers all gone ignoble mad over Prince

To Admiral Maxse.

Box Hill, 1879

MY DEAREST FRED,—I send bag to-day, come up to-morrow. I pass Cubitt's eternal finger at 3 P.M. Meet me there, if you can. My way will be up by the avenue, his drive

Will is improving, but prostrate, and likely to be legless for a couple of weeks. Boys have to learn in this way. If they will not take good advice in the brain, Nature thumps them. Happy they who are admonished even then.—Your loving

GEORGE M.

To G. W. Foote

Box Hill, DORKING, May 30, 1879.

DEAR SIR,—I have read Mr. Thomson's article on my book, with the singular pleasure we feel when it is evident that we have been loved of old date, and by the very worthiest, and that nothing but love can have that way of speaking. The mental stature of the critic is the point, after which the sincerity. He who does me the honour to praise me in this instance, is to be valued in both respects. I wish that work of his were forthcoming.

You will pardon the delay in my reply to you. I have been away from home, rather unwell, as I grieve to hear it is the case with Mr. Thomson. I finished a 3 vol. work rapidly, and as it comes mainly from the head and has nothing to kindle imagination, I thirsted to be rid of it soon after conception, and it became a struggle in which health suffered, and my unfailing specific of hard exercise was long in resting me. I look to the Dauphiné Alps, to which I go in July, to do that more completely.

Let me hope that 'The Liberal' promises to flourish. I have it monthly, but know not what opinion to form

Night and to be praised by the author of that poem would strike all men able to form a judgment upon eminent work as a distinction

In July 1878 James Thomson was—through Mr Foote's introduction—put in correspondence with Meredith whose work he had long held in high esteem

To James Thomson

1879

The Reviewers are not likely to give you satisfaction
But read them nevertheless if they come in your way
The humour of a situation that allots the pulpit to them,
and (for having presumed to make an appearance) the
part of Devil to you, will not fail of consolation My
inclination is to believe that you will find free thoughted
men enough to support you

To R. L. Stevenson

GOLDRILL HOUSE PATTERDALE
WESTMORELAND July 28 1879

MY DEAR STEVENSON—I am here with the Editor of the 'Fortnightly' battling with rain and mists and stiff from a recent stiffish path up and down crags of a sufficient slope for brooks and kids Now and then we have a spot of sun He would smile but he must cry and he has got a tragic handkerchief and with horrid iteration of stage action he resumes it when we are expecting him to give us a countenance There is a nymph whose death he caused by giving too much—I am not so far from you my host says It is his intention to write to you shortly apropos of work in his imperial contemplation I have

Louis Napoleon, whom they insist on calling the Prince Imperial, as if with the design to offend the French? On this occasion the 'Pall Mall' is not an inch above the others. The Prince was a legacy of blood to France. As a professional Pretender and youth of good courage, he sought distinction and consequently he pressed to the front —and if he had come home without brilliant distinction, he would have been ridiculous to the French for having done nothing to repolish the name of a Sedanned Bonaparte To abuse our Generals and officers for letting him see service is foul folly.—He was evidently a little intoxicated with his first command.—It would of course have been as well if Lieut Carey had turned an eye to look after him —Here is a strange war, in which the best of our nation are heartily with the enemy!—I am not perfectly re-established, anæmic, vacuous, adust, songless, fountainless I hope it is better with you My love to all —Your affectionate

GEORGE MEREDITH.

Comyns Carr is a capital fellow and good boon-fellow. The other man you mention is an underbred and tiresome dolt.

To James Thomson.

I am glad to be in personal communication with you. The pleasant things you have written of me could not be other than agreeable to a writer I saw that you had the rare deep love of literature, rare at all times and in our present congestion of matter almost extinguished; which led you to recognize any effort to produce the worthiest For when a friend unmasked your initials, I was flattered For I had read the 'City of Dreadful

send to Hill, the baker of bread and biscuits Albert Mansions, Victoria Street if I leave the volumes there addressed to you? I have this time fought resolutely to preserveto a copy for you, though they do but dole out four to me. Whether you will like it I cannot guess, as the whole cast of it is against the modern style, and you are not obliged to say anything about it if you do not. Give my love to the 5 years besieged and the young ladies. Accept it yourself —Your faithfulest

GEORGE MEREDITH

To William Hardman

Box Hill Nov 10 1870

MY DEAR LORD WILLIAM —I shall not say that the Tory Government is worth a rap until I hear of you as a City Magistrate, and the news that your Queen has laid her broadsword so smartly upon you that you have sprung up a knight. I wish immensely for an evening with you all. The state of the case is that I come but one day to town and I am busy at home with fresh work. On Tuesday I am at liberty till 8½ P M when I am at London Bridge Station to return to my Hill. I could not put off my work in the day without muletting myself heavily and so just for the present till my work is easier in my hand I must abstain from offering myself to you. This however I cannot but add that I wish greatly to see you all. But will you not think of coming down to me some day? Tom Taylor was here yesterday, with family, and they found our Indian summer magnificent. The woods are worth seeing. Even in the winter, as you know well, we can fill the poet's mind with cherishable matter. I come to town to-morrow from Dorking 10 A M —Arriving at Victoria station at 11 and if I don't

VOI 1 —U

ventured to assure him that there will be no man better for it. He and I have been wonderfully pleased with the Cevennes excursion and the Donkey. I prize Modestine above the cause The night in the Pine Forest is memorable I should have written of it in the fresh burst of my satisfaction, but knew not where to aim to hit you —The diplomatic Kegan has dealt me a stroke Without a word to me, he sold the right of issue of the 'Egoist' to the 'Glasgow Herald,' and allowed them to be guilty of a perversion of my title. I wrote to him in my incredulous astonishment He replied to me, excusing himself with cool incompetency He will have to learn (he is but young at it) that these things may be done once—not more

I fancy I shall leave Morley for Box [Hill] on Tuesday, hardly later, except perchance on the tempting of a fine day. Give my compliments with addition of warmth to them to your Mother and Father Henley wrote for my Essay on Comedy I have directed my wife to post it to him.

Adieu Keep strong work in view, for you are of the few who can accomplish it Let me hear of you when the mood is on you, and encourage the mood to come — Your friendliest

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To William Hardman

Box Hill, Nov 5, 1879

MY DEAR SIR WILLIAM,—If you care to have a copy of my latest book, will you tell me where I can leave it when I come to town on Tuesday next. I am so busy on the one day of my enforced visit to your Metropolis, that I cannot, as often I wish, turn aside to St George's Road from Victoria Station ; but would it suit you to

together by one of the strong causes which embrace general interests The work done, it goes to pieces, for the reason that Liberal and Radical sentiment is shared by a very minor portion There is no soul of Liberalism

Hopeless, I suppose to think of asking you to come down here ?—Your loving GEORGE MEREDITH

To James Thomson

Box Hill, Dorking April 27 1880

DEAR SIR—I will not delay any longer to write to you on the subject of your book, though I am not yet in a condition to do justice either to the critic or the poet for owing to the attack I suffered under last year I have been pensioned off all work of any worth of late, and in writing to you about this admirable and priceless book of verse I have wished to be competent to express my feeling for your merit and as much as possible the praise of such rarely equalled good work My friends could tell you that I am a critic hard to please They say that irony lurks in my eulogy I am not in truth frequently satisfied by verse Well I have gone through your volume, and partly a second time, and I have not found the line I would propose to recast I have found many pages that no other English poet could have written Nowhere is the verse feeble nowhere is the expression insufficient the majesty of the line has always its full colouring, and marches under a banner And you accomplished this effect with the utmost sobriety, with absolute self mastery I have not time at present to speak of the City of Melancholia There is a massive impressiveness in it that goes beyond Durer, and takes it into upper regions where poetry is the sublimation of the mind of man, the voice of our highest What might have been

see you (I could wish to, but I know how hard-worked you are), I will march over to Hill, Baker, and deposit with him the Three Volumes, addressed to you, to be called for. My love to you all.—Your faithfulest

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Admiral Marse

Box Hill, March 2, 1880.

MY DEAR FRED,—Though we are not running together we need not be disunited I follow you sometimes in the newspapers and think of you often But you, on account of your infidelities, protest to be the warmer —By the way, your letters on the Commune greatly pleased me.

I am very unwell During the frost I was able to work in the morning and evening When the soft winds came I broke down, the stomach lost all power, and since then I have worked badly and waked continually I will try and call on you to-morrow, when I shall be in town, but doubt my ability.

I will try to get the poem on 'France' at Chapman and Hall's It has not been republished and is in the Jany. number of the Fortnightly for 1871 —I have a copy somewhere If I can find it to-day you shall have it —I shall be at the Garrick at 7 o'clock to-morrow, and if you don't see me between 12 and 1 P M make an effort for the Garrick. English politics appear to be at their highest a hurly-burly, and I don't wonder that French should have a greater hold on you The Liberal chiefs here have ruined the cause for 20 years The only hope, it seems to me, is that Radicalism should be avowed, and the sham medium done away with. But then there would be no prospects of Office for a long term and at least the prospect is desired This country is Tory The party against it is a fractional party, only to be held

To R. L. Stevenson

BOX HILL DORKING
ENGLAND June 1880

MY DEAR STEVENSON — We have all had great rejoicing over news coming direct from you drawn from the Springs Mariette Will, my wife and I congratulate you on your temerity We all want to know when it is that we are to see you Bear that in mind and let us hear of you when you turn your face east to the Island again We had rumours of you first from Walter Pollock, who came down to Leatherhead to lecture on Dumas the Elder then from Leslie Stephen on his visit to us at the head of six of the famous corps of the Sunday Tramps but these rumours were vague, though they blew note of a Wife and had thunder in them Let me tell you that our household roars at the absence of any communication from her lord concerning the lady Has he married Enigma—to tell of whom is split the head? Is she American?—Californian?—Scottish washed in Pacific brine?

The Sunday Tramps visiting us were L. S. for leader or Pied Piper, Morison, Fredk Pollock Croom Robertson Edgeworth and another Will and I shouldered a sack of cold sausages, Polaris and Hock and met them at old Dorking Station Thence away to Leith Hill where, in splendid sunlight we consumed the soul of the sack talked spiritedly (you may have been mentioned among the brilliant subjects), rolled and smoked Then down the piny clefts of the hill by Friday Street into the sloping meadows each side the Tillingbourne leaping through Evelyn's Wooton, along under Ranmore to our cottage and dinner To this day the walk has a bubbling memory, L. S. in a recent number of the 'Pall Mall' has described it in the philosophic manner—By the way, you have

said contra poet, I am glad that you should have fore-stalled and answered in 'Philosophy'—very wise writing I am in love with the dear London lass who helped you to the 'Idyll of Cockaigne.' You give a zest and new attraction to Hampstead Heath . —Yours very faithfully,

GEORGE MEREDITH

To Frederick Greenwood.

BOX HILL, DORKING, May 4, 1880

MY DEAR GREENWOOD,—You are having thousands of letters and are deep in business If I swell the list with my bit of sentiment, I can make it short because I am certain that you know me true to you. My first impression last Saturday evening was one of a personal catastrophe I have walked per annum about 450 miles for my Pall Mall And I felt that it was a startling loss to the country. Yours was the one English paper that could boast of independent views and competent power of expression. On Sunday the Tramps came down for a walk to Leith Hill (which was glorious, and the feast ensuing satisfactory) and they were sympathetic. We said [that] Greenwood thumped, and hard We loved him when we thought him right, we hated when we thought him wrong, but right or wrong, the fist was honest, it was a giant's and it was English. However, Monday brought the better news that you soon pilot and captain another vessel The Pall Mall did not make you, but you the P M So it will be with the new venture, and I still believe that the country has enough of the right metal in it to back your new conception of the signification of journalism I could proceed, but it would be chattering. Certain worthy words were printed by the old Morning Post, which pleased me. Adieu, I am always with you at heart, and ever yours,

GEORGE MEREDITH

I am, with my heartiest salute to Mrs Robert Louis,
your faithful

GEORGE MEREDITH

Both dogs Islai and Jacobi, in sound condition

To Edmund Gosse¹

Box Hill, Dorking Dec. 4 1880

DEAR SIR —A letter such as you have done me the honour to send me is as you must know in your experience, the best reward and encouragement a writer can have —I am, yours very faithfully, GEORGE MEREDITH

To Sir William Hardman²

Box Hill, Feb 7 1881

MY DEAR FRIEND —I heard of your loss of your mother long after this had befallen you. Whatever strikes at your breast must always touch mine and I need not tell you of my sympathy. But that can hardly be called a loss in which the reason of all concerned is forced to acquiesce in spite of grief. I thought over the old time, and a good soul gone, a right pleasant face and your natural regrets and then felt that it had come to you in the natural order of things.

This is to tell you that I have a book³ for you—not to be reviewed only to be read at your entire leisure. I fear you will not care for it. But it is history, and a curious chapter of human nature.

Often I meditate writing to propose myself for an evening. I find it impossible to spare the time for an unpopular author has to work hard. Some day I shall

¹ In acknowledgment of a letter expressing appreciation of *Phœbe* with Admetus

² Who had recently become Editor of the *Morning Post*

³ *The Tragic Comedians*

heard that Morley has the 'Pall Mall'? Greenwood is off to the 'St. James's Gazette,' after a snap with George Smith, who has a son-in-law that is Gladstonite. Hence Gladstone's victory at the elections precipitated the fall of Greenwood, the foe of Gladstone. But the fall of very mighty heroes is to rise. Greenwood towers in his new paper: the poor 'Pall Mall' drags on melancholily, as it were with bowels out, for Greenwood marched the whole of the 'Pall Mall' staff away to his drumming, and Morley has to be abroad recruiting.

Last year I was down with Morley at Ullswater. We talked of you and he wrote to you in your hills near Edina, but had no answer. He wanted to engage you to do some work for the 'Fortnightly'—had it in his mind to propose Travels in the Vosges or Harz, I think. Leaving Westmoreland I took my family to France, where it was discovered that Will had Whooping Cough; an illumination to me, for in the Spring I had been seized with an incomprehensible attack, Mariette as well, all the symptoms the same as Will's. I used to cough at night until the works threatened a strike, and I was frightfully overthrown by it. I was partly under the shadow of it when you last saw me. I left my family in Normandy and crossed Touraine and the centre of France to Clermont-Ferrand, by rail through the Chaulat, a bit of your Cevennes country, to Nîmes, on to Marseilles and Bordighera, back to Dauphiné. After a couple of weeks in the Norman home we returned to our cot. Here I have been working ever since. The children are well. I have an idea of sending Will to Westminster School for the term after Christmas. I fancy I have more to say, but there's no space. We have heard on all sides great praise of your Cevennes tour. The article on Thoreau is good reading.

Let me hear from you again.

*To Arthur Cecil Blunt*¹

Box Hill, May 16 1881

MY DEAR ARTHUR — My wife is to be in town this week and would like me to hint to you in roundabout phrase that the present of (you see I have not the feminine genius) tickets for four to some place of entertainment would give her not only personal satisfaction but a sort of intimately theatrical air to flaunt before her friends, two of whom are girls from the country who think actors are demigods and one an old lady who laughs for an hour at a casual stage grimace, or a tale of a tightness of breech or what you will that's funny All four would make a splendid quartette of claqueurs for any new piece you may know of whether in or out of it

So far I have done my duty and I think delicately and elegantly They are people who pay to witness our stage entertainments, so it will not astonish you that some people should rank it a favour to be allowed to see them for nothing I have advised my wife to go and see (it was once my doom while waiting for Chaumont) your great Mr Collette in 'Bounce' your great modern Play I fancy the spectacle might work a cure for curiosity

On Sunday next the Tramps headed by Leslie Stephen dine with me after a walk to Leith Hill Sunday after there will be room, and this is the jolly bachelor hour of the year remember —Yours ever GEORGE MEREDITH

To Arthur Cecil Blunt

Box Hill May 17 1881

MY DEAR ARTHUR — I am asked by my wife whether I gave you her address in town I reply that I think

¹ The Arthur Cecil of the playhouse

hope to descend on you. My love to D'Troia and the young ladies

The book shall be left at the University Club, Suffolk Street.—Ever your affectionate GEORGE MEREDITH.

To James Cotter Morison.

Box Hill, March 28, 1881.

DEAREST ST. B,—Will brings me word that Theodore gives a bad report of you How is it? Pray let me hear from some member of the monastery I was about to send you a vehement denunciation of your silence. St. Bernardine in lofty wrath, but if you are ill, I retract, and down on my knees for your recovery. I, by dint of exercise upon Rakoczy water, am coming round to some sanity of condition—How wonderfully well Morley is driving the 'Pall Mall' We may say too good for that, but he is a priceless editor. On the other hand the 'St James's Gazette' is an astonishing collapse of ability. It is nothing but incessant barking

'The day is going, now 'tis noon,
Greenwood 'gins bay the Gladstone moon,
While temperate Morley with assuaging voice
Bids England in her bigger G. rejoice.'

I have not seen Morley for long —It is very good of you all to let us have Theodore at Easter We will take our best care of him. Will is very sensible of his kindness at Westminster My boy has been much improved—'manlified'—by the school already, likes it, is growing proud of it, and may in a modest way prove a credit to it before he leaves

Give my love to all and believe me ever yours at heart,
• GEORGE MEREDITH.

The dreadful curse of Verse is on me, and has been for two months.

You should have rest for a year The first thing to consider is the restoration of your physical soundness, and rest in the right sort of atmosphere for you might do much in a few months —either on our South Coast, or Devon or if advisable at Davos platz in the Grisons, where friends of mine of weak lungs have been with profit Your pride, I hope, will not be offended if I offer to che out your income during the term of your necessary relapse You have laboured valiantly and won our respect, and you may well consent to rest for awhile, when that is the best guarantee for your taking up the fight again But come to us in September I fancy your term at Lille is then over and we shall all be overjoyed to welcome you Your sister Mariette is a good, humane intelligent girl an excellent musician already, for her ago and Will, though not brilliant is a kindly fellow, with wits of a slow sort He is at Westminster School, and friends of mine in town do mo the favour to invite him to their houses instead of his father so he sees a little of Society, and has manners above the schoolboys You will take to them both They will look forward to a glad time if you say you are coming Our cottage can now supply a bedroom and this is at your disposal for as long as you please When I was informed of your wishing to throw up your situation at Lille that you might embrace the profession of Literature, I was alarmed My own mischance in that walk I thought a sufficient warning But if you come to me I will work with you in my chalet (you will find it a very quiet and pretty study) and we will occupy your leisure to some good purpose I am allowed the reputation of a tolerable guide in writing and style, and I can certainly help you to produce clear English You shall share the chalet with me Here you will be saving instead of wasting

not, having merely fulfilled a formality, which you could treat as such, and so an end to the matter. But women have not this fine philosophy, and the great exemplar of the sex to me keeps repeating .

‘ Footman ’,

and again

‘ Mrs Footman ’,

which seems like a contradiction in terms—a violent collision and impossible conjunction of the sexes ; besides imputing I know not what to the man of calves —

‘ Footman ’ (says she),
46 Torrington Square ’

There was a fair Footman of Torrington Square
Desired to a Theatre Royal to repair,
With her nieces three, purple as Scotia’s thistle,
And enjoy the rich humours of great Mr. Cecil,
Who of the Comic Muse questionless mate is,
And this they were anxious for perfectly gratis

With which, dear Arthur, vive atque vale —Yours,
GEORGE MEREDITH

To Arthur G. Meredith

Box Hill, Dorking, June 19, 1881.

‘ MY DEAR ARTHUR,—I have been struck to the heart by hearing ill news of your health from Lionel Robinson. He was here yesterday, and told me of your having had to consult a physician in London about spitting of blood. Let me know of your present condition immediately, and of how you feel affected, and what you think to be the cause of it The account of the nature of your work makes me fully commend the wisdom of your decision to quit it and Lille It would severely tax the strongest.

on a depressed system I could raise a cry of thankfulness to that strange divinity of Accident Providence at your release from those conditions in good time—as I trust it is I shall be glad when you quit Lille Your scheme of taking to mountain air is wise, I think, but watch yourself, and should it act unfavourably—as I do not fancy it will—the warmest sea side air you can get in Europe—Malaga—will be best for you If, on the other hand the mountain suits you and you are benefited by the sharp purity of it, one would say that Davos platz in winter would be preferable to the Riviera where treacherous winds are at work to undo the restorative sunlight At Davos platz you would find Louis Stevenson a friend of mine, a promising young writer, but latterly struck with weakness of chest I am told he intends to pass a second winter there Some invalids are splendidly invigorated by its tonic atmosphere, and if this can be enjoyed, where the malady has not distinctly set in a rapid cure ensues Your letter bids me hope, and perhaps it may be as it seems that when you have thorough rest and change of scene sweet air and appetite, you will make new blood, and therewith remake your frame My thoughts will follow you still anxiously It is a holiday to me to think of you soon having liberty

You speak of your income I am glad it is so much more than Poco told me it was I feared you would hardly have enough and dreaded your being forced to go into harness again, without requisite strength Poco says you understand the management of your money, and that Mr Mill Williams invests it for you I should imagine him to be an excellent adviser In these days I do not like Banks The American Government Consols please me beyond most investments—I am to inherit

money, at all events. It will in no way be time lost. After all, with some ability, and a small independence just to keep away the wolf, and a not devouring ambition, Literature is the craft one may most honourably love. I do not say to you, try it I should say the reverse to anyone. But assuming you to be under the obligation to rest, you might place yourself in my hands here with advantage ; and leading a quiet life in good air, you would soon, I trust, feel strength return and discern the bent of your powers. Anything is preferable to that perilous alternation of cold market and hot café at Lille I had no idea of what you were undergoing, or I would have written to you before No one better than I from hard privation knows the value of money. But health should not be sacrificed to it. I long greatly to see you. I would at once run over to Lille, if I could spare the time. Write to me, and specially of your health, on the day you receive this—a dozen lines, in the case of a press of business. You may rely on my wife's cordial anxiety to see you well and receive you here.—I shall be troubled until I hear from you.—Believe me, ever at heart, your affectionate father,

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Arthur G. Meredith

Box Hill, DORKING, June 23, 1881

MY DEAR ARTHUR,—Mariette brought your letter up to 'my chalet at noon to-day, 'A letter from Arthur, Papa.' She knew I was anxious to hear from you—On the whole the news rather relieved me, but that I am uncertain whether, with the cessation of the haemorrhage, the blood-spitting has quite discontinued. If it has, one is allowed to suppose that the evil was done during the last severe winter, under trying conditions,

probably at the time of vintage in Italy, of which she is enthusiastic. Our dear friend Tom Taylor was there with her one Autumn. We have lost him. I felt the loss keenly. You may not have seen a sonnet¹ I wrote on him in the 'Cornhill Magazine.' Sometimes it used to strike me that writings of mine might fall under your eye. Have you any taste for verse or light literature? There is no harm if not, except that it helps to freshness of style and elegance in graver writings.

We have been long estranged, my dear boy, and I awake from it with a shock that wrings me. The elder should be the first to break through such divisions, for he knows best the tenor and the nature of life. But our last parting gave me the idea that you did not care for me, and further I am so driven by work that I do not contend with misapprehension of me, or with dis regard but have the habit of taking it from all alike, as a cab horse takes the whip. Part of me has become torpid. The quality of my work does not degenerate, I can say no more. Only in my branch of the profession of letters the better the work the worse the pay, and also it seems the lower the esteem in which one is held for it.

I shall hope to hear from you soon. Writing bent over a desk cannot be good for you therefore do not write me long letters. A few lines of your state of health will be enough.

We should all have had delight in welcoming you home but your project is in every way advisable. Try to come to us next year in May or in June, for the Summer—By the way when travelling, or anywhere in towns and where you do not know the wells avoid the drinking water. In France I take Eau de St. Galmier.

¹ To a Friend Lost

something from a relative, who is an old lady of 80 and more, and an imbecile, but extremely tenacious of her crazy hold of life, so that I see no holiday before me, and there are chances of my being outlasted. Whether I inherit or not the money goes to my children, so you will have your share.—My health is now far from good. I finished the last volumes of a novel two years back by writing at night for three months. An attack of whooping cough followed on the lowered nerves. I have never been well since then. My digestion is entirely deranged, and still I have to write—and for a public that does not care for my work. These were the thoughts that used to give me such alarm at your craving to wield the pen. As for me, I have failed, and I find little to make the end undesirable. While I can be of service to my children, I would stay, but no longer. There is nothing saddening about death to a man of my age. But the thought of a child of mine having the prospect of life extinguished in his youth, is a cruel anguish. Hitherto my lungs have worked soundly—Nothing but the stomach has ever been weak. Unhappily this is a form of weakness that incessant literary composition does not agree with.

As to meeting you on the Continent, I wish I could give myself the anticipation of doing so. It would brighten me. I cannot say yes, but will not yet say decisively no, for it may happen that I shall be able to come. In that case, I suppose the place of meeting would be Strasburg or Basle. You may be sure I would not walk you overmuch. However, for two or three weeks I will not speak of it. Give me early the exact date of your leaving Lille.

It pleases me to hear that you will be with Janet,¹

¹ Mrs. Ross, who, on leaving Egypt with her husband, had settled on the outskirts of Florence.

I hope you have had good news of Ivor Will rowed (at short warning) in the Westminster Eight against the Leander Club the other day, and writes that the training and exercise have made him feel rather giant like I have good news of my boy Arthur He starts for Strasburg on the 1st August, and after a visit there he mounts the Swiss or Tyrolean heights He begs me to join him, but this I fear won't be possible, or any holiday I have two Novels in hand, and of one there is a prospect for the Cornhill Perhaps it will be the duller for my dulness, but I can't help that I have been writing much verse — As to health, not vastly improved The sameness of our animal life here would counteract the sweet specifics Present my respects and remembrances to your Mother, and write to me again By the way, Bradlaugh threatens to be foolish The House is wrong, but this will make two false steps on his part and the unit against the aggregate cannot afford one The folly is to take strong measures upon no popular sentiment to back him — Yours warmly

GEORGE MEREDITH

To Arthur G. Meredith

Box Hill DORKING, July 27 1881

MY DEAR ARTHUR — I have gone through the abstract of your essay with an awakened interest It is deeply thought, ingenious (in the best sense) and sets me looking for a complete work With most of the statements I can agree I myself am, as a describer of nature and natural emotions, a constant sufferer in dealing with a language part of which is dead matter — You will do good service in directing attention to the point, though I do not see how our English is to be vitalized throughout

and in Germany the Seltzers —water of mineral springs The ordinary water is corrupt—and here as well. Typhoid is a common disease in consequence. Wherever you settle see that your drinking water has been boiled

I will write again next week.—It will be a grief to me if I cannot meet you. I am in a difficulty with the work I am doing just now and behindhand with it, or I would not hesitate.—Your loving father, GEORGE MEREDITH.

Mariette's kisses are blown to you, and my wife bids me remember her to you affectionately All of us will be rejoiced by any good tidings of you

To Admiral Maxse.

Box Hill, DORKING, July 1881

MY DEAR FRED,—I did not go to salute the illustrious of this people Morley went, was introduced, found the P affable, cordial, simple, etc, and the Crown P. of G. a model of manliness He says the entertainment was pleasant—good music. It would have required the young-eyed cherubim in full choric response to attract me to London

I wish, however, that I had chit-chat to enliven your Vichy dulness I sent you a 'Daily News' containing the correspondence from Merv of the enterprising Donovan, under the supposition that you don't have the paper sent to you regularly in France—While you are at Vichy read Mdme. de Sévigné's Letters in relation to the place They are interesting, as indeed she always is Also a book by Emile Montégut contains an account of Vichy that may point out unobserved things to be admired I read it in the 'R des deux Mondes' It is one of a collection of articles on notable French spots.—

disappointment, rather think that you will not see me than that you will

What do you say to sitting down in the winter on the Riviera to write a brief sketch of your essay in a couple of papers for the 'Fortnightly Review'? I can guarantee that Mr Morley would give due attention to any work from a son of mine and in the 'Fortnightly' it would have the choicest circle of readers. Subsequently, you could enlarge it for publication in a volume—I believe that at Mentone a Dr George Macdonald¹ lives, a writer of mark, to whom an introduction could be got for you—Perhaps if the Autumn is denied to me, I might have a taste of the Riviera in the winter. I was there the year before last in September. Adieu. My warmest wishes and prayers are with you—Your loving father,

GEORGE MEREDITH

To Arthur G. Meredith

Box Hill Dorking August 5 1881

MY DEAR ARTHUR—By this post I have sent you a 'Fortnightly Review' containing an article by Grant Allen, a writer of some distinction upon the English race. He thinks that Celtic blood preponderates. I do not, though I see it flooding. To mix among people is to have another lesson by experience—However, the essay may be of use to you.

I rejoice that you have flown and am as glad of your release as if I had personally risen singing on the free air. It pleases me to think of your visiting old Stuttgart and meditating on youthful impressions there. I remember regretting your aversion to Berne, for we lose the proper sense of the richness of life if we do not look

¹ Author of *At the Back of the North Wind* *Annals of a Quiet Neighbourhood* etc

—I fancy still that you are in danger of overlooking the large admixture of Celtic blood in the English race. Irish and Cambrian have a portion of them under that banner.—But this does not affect your argument, but strengthens it if you succeed in showing to satisfaction that the English manifest themselves Teutonly. As far as I observe them, the heart of the nation is Teuton and moral, and therewith intellectually obtuse, next to speechless. It has, however, a shifty element, and a poetic, and this tells again for you, that the poetic, seeming to come from our Celtic blood, flies at once to the well-springs of the tongue whenever it is in need of vital imagery.—I wish I had time to discuss it. I am hard driven.

Whether I can come to you hangs doubtful. I am half bound to work for the 'Cornhill', and as I am unpopular I am ill-paid, and therefore bound to work double tides, hardly ever able to lay down the pen. This affects my weakened stomach, and so the round of the vicious circle is looped. I will come—be sure, if I find it prudently possible. The course I should like would be to Munich, Innsbruck, over the Brenner to one of the heights in view of the Dolomites and thence around. At Primiero or San Martino excellent quarters may be had, and I long for Italian colour with mountain air. Yet I could not enjoy it under pressure of work to finish or a holiday stolen; I have lost my old buoyancy.—Keep me informed of your whereabouts and your route. Pray do not tax your strength or expose yourself to night air in travelling, if avoidable. In a couple of months precautions may not be so necessary—Here at home I am urged to join you, and it is no fault of the family that I am not off at once. The time for starting would be toward the latter end of August 20-25th. But to preclude

got sight of one or other of my works and hit on the idea that I was a cousin worth noticing Of course I wrote courteously, and groan now under the debt of another letter Adieu, my dear boy Be careful of your health, and do not relax precautions because of a brave spirit and better signs —Your loving father

GEORGE MEREDITH

To Admiral Maxse

Box Hill Sept 27 1881

MY DEAR FRED,—You are always kind, and I should be glad to come, but for the present I am better here—I am coming round and in a day or two work will no longer be interdicted I begin to feel my brain once more—Your mother has asked me to spend some days at Effingham Hill when you are there This will suit me—if you can make up your mind to it I had to leave the Hill on Sunday as I was not fit society for man or brute scarce for myself in my chalet Some day I should very much like to visit you at Eastbourne Adieu I have many letters to write, and can hardly get through with them—Hardman speaks of the Penny M Post as an astounding success' and Sir Algernon as the Coming Millionaire What English public would not pay a penny to read all about the aristocracy!—Your loving

GEORGE MEREDITH

To M André Raffalovich

Box Hill DORKING
ENGLAND Nov 7 1881

SIR,—I have been absent from home on a round of visits and I beg you will accept it as my apology to you for the backwardness of this reply to your letter If my letters were commonly of so pleasant a nature I

back on scenes of our youth with imaginative warmth.—There are several ways, all attractive, of entering Tyrol from the basis of little Constance. Either by Munich and Innsbruck, or from Bregenz over the Vorarlberg and down to Stanger Thal to Landeck—which you may not have quite forgotten, or taking the rail from Lindau to Kempten, through Reutte and Lermoos to Nassereith in the Oberinnthal, a day's walk from Innsbruck, whence over the Brenner to Bozen, where you command routes to the Dolomites, the loveliest scenes in Europe. Should you (and I not with you) go to Cortina d'Ampezzo, you will probably meet a neighbour of mine living in a big house on Mickleham Downs—a Mr. Dixon. His two daughters are with him; very amiable, rather shy, intelligent. He is an enthusiastic traveller in Italy and the Alps of old date. He recommended San Martino—half a day from Cortina or more—to me if I should be able to come. I begin to have a touch of despair, my work gets on so slowly, and I must hand in a certain quantity by the end of October. If not this Autumn, I may be at liberty for a run to the Riviera in the winter. But I dare not project. The Fates have destined me for a cab-horse, and I find myself getting the jogging soul as well as the pace over everlasting sameness—Give my warm regards to your hostess, my compliments to her husband. A trip to the Vosges offers good prospects for walking. I know only the kind of scenery. Communicate with me as you proceed, but let the wish be subordinate to your leisure.—By the way, did I tell you of my receiving a letter from one signing himself Guglielmo Meredith Read Cabral, claiming me for his cousin? He writes from Lisbon. His sister married Costa Cabral formerly Prime Minister, now Marchese and Ambassador of Portugal at Rome. I knew of them. It seems that Madame Cabral

To Admiral Maxse

Box Hill Dec. 7 1881

MY DEAR FRED,—It is distressing news of the Governor¹ I had fears about the climate Olive has youth in her favour, but it will relieve me to hear that she is better

As for me, I am heavily struck, improving very slowly, if real improvement be possible Hutchinson seems to understand the case but whether I owe my present working condition to medicine and the cessation of it will leave me stranded, I can't guess

The name 'Avalon' is pretty I like it—I am in harness to my novel Poetry comes easier than prose and bedevils me If I could work longer at a stretch I should the sooner get released and have a chance of recovery

Let me see you when you come to Effingham Perhaps you will give me a bed one night in London, some time in January or the next month

Morley seems to me very spirited—keen of brain He also has his physical trials I regret to think but gout is a good natured giant to contend with on the whole—or that is my view I hope you are fairly well—Your loving

GEORGE M

To Admiral Maxse

Box Hill Dec. 26 1881

MY DEAR FRED—I have the ill luck to be engaged to dinner tables in the valley—have had also to write to Morley of a previous engagement to the Board where we sit like convicts—fine specimens of the Joy of earth,

¹ Admiral Maxse's elder brother Sir Fitzhardinge Maxse had been Governor of Heligoland and was Governor of Newfoundland at that time

² Miss Maxse elder daughter of Admiral Maxse

should give the order when leaving home for them to be sent in pursuit of me.

I venture to judge by your name that you are at most but half English. I can consequently believe in the feeling you express for the work of an unpopular writer. Otherwise one would incline to be sceptical, for the English are given to practical jokes, and to stir up the vanity of authors who are supposed to languish in the shade amuses them. There is en revanche great enthusiasm for the popular. You have probably had sufficient experience upon these points from the Editors of Reviews to whom you have applied. Your appreciation of my work does me great honour, but when I think of your wasting time in the effort to make my work more widely known, I am distressed. Good work has a fair chance to be recognised in the end, and if not, what does it matter? The only concern one should have is for the personal assurance that one has done one's best.

Do not suppose that I wish to chill your generous warmth. I am touched by it, and so much that I could desire it to have a worthier object; for a man capable of admiring as you appear to be, should have but our noblest in his heart, and only a nod of encouragement for members of the lesser order. At least I may hope that you will not in after years have to accuse my work of vitiating your taste for higher literature. You see, I have assumed you to be young as well as foreign in some degree. Only the young, the very young, and the quick of blood can write as you have done. Think well of me for as long as you are able to without repressing your growing capacity for criticism.

I am, with my hearty thanks to you for obeying the good impulse to write to me, your most faithful and obliged

GEORGE MEREDITH.



with every fruit of earth to excite. But Soul is wanting here.

Telegraph the hour in the afternoon when one may find you at Dorking Station ; I may see you for half an hour — Brighton did me good service. If I had leisure and could find liveliness, I think I might come round.— Your loving

GEORGE MEREDITH.

To Admiral Maxse

Box Hill, Dec. 27, 1881

MY DEAR FRED,—I have sent a letter to Rutland, but have heard subsequently that we had no Post out on Boxing Day — We are heavily bound to the people here by engagements to dine with them. The fever of hospitality lasts till the end of next week. I wish I could be with you at Effingham. However, I am decidedly better. Brighton served me well. The air blew in from sea, and I was on pier or parade all the hours of light— and not using my pen. The translation shall be attended to — I will meet you on Thursday at the top of Cubitt's Avenue. Further I shall not be able to drag my legs, as the malady seems to be nervous, affecting the spine, and I begin to feel my legs labouring after an hour of motion — I have had curious letters from a Russian, who has written on my books in the 'Journal de St Petersbourg' and the 'Gaulois'. a M André Raffalovich. Is it perchance you who have put him on me ? — Reply as to our meeting, and appoint to meet as near my cottage as you can. Olive, I hope, is going on favourably. Sorry to miss a sight of the boys Present my respects very warmly to my lady — Your loving

GEORGE MEREDITH.

